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YET!

You have spurned my soul's devotion;
You have made all hope depart;
You have laughed at all my sorrow,
You have mocked my wounded heart.

Yet your glances still enthral me,
'Gainst all power of mind or will,
And my heart, e'en while it's aching,
Beats in passion for you still.

LORD AND LADY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "PENKIVIL," "OLIVE VARCOE," "BY CROOKED PATHS," "SHEATHED IN VELVET," ETC., ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER I.

IN THE front room of a cottage perched on a Devonshire cliff lay a woman waiting for that Messenger who comes to all of us sooner or later. The rays of the setting sun, which dyed the scarcely rippling sea a brilliant crimson, fell upon her face and upon that of a young girl who knelt beside the bed and held the dying woman's hand.

The face of the woman was softened by the approaching climax, and but for a strange restlessness and uncertainty in her eyes it would have been wholly at peace.

She had been silent some time, watching the reflection of the sunlight on the wall, and the young girl had been watching her, silently too, with tear-dimmed eyes.

At last the woman turned her head and looked at the lovely face, and forced a smile.

"What time is it, Miss Norah?" she asked in a faint voice.

The girl took out her watch.

"Nearly eight, Catherine dear," she replied.

The woman sighed.

"I shall sink with the sun," she said, not complainingly, but with the listless apathy of one who is waiting and longing for peace.

The girl's tears fell, but she cried quietly and unobtrusively, and even endeavored to conceal them from her companion, who saw them nevertheless.

"Don't cry, dear," she said. "Don't be —unhappy. I should not be ill—if I were not leaving you alone—all alone!"

"Don't think of me, Catherine dear," said the girl, forcing back her tears. 'Oh, if there were anything I could do!"

The woman shook her head.

"There is nothing," she said feebly. "I am quite willing to go, but—but for the thought of leaving you. Norah, I have done my duty——"

"Oh, Catherine!"

"I have tried, since your mother died, to be a—a mother to you!"

The girl put her arm round her and kissed her.

"You have been all that a mother could be to me—all, Catherine!" responded the girl sobbingly.

A strange look came into the dying woman's face, and she raised her hand and laid it lovingly, wistfully on the girl's head.

"And you have loved me as if—as if I had been your mother, dear?" she asked, with a sudden intensity.

"Yes, yes, you know that dear," assented Norah fervently. "Why, I scarcely remember any other mother than you. You have been——" She could not get any further.

Catherine Hayes' eyes closed, and a look of ineffable happiness and peace stole like the sun-light across her face.

"Yes, I know," she murmured. "It has been the only thing that has made it possible. If you had not loved me, Norah——" She stopped, and was silent a moment or two. Then she said, "Norah, have you thought of what you will do when I am gone?"

Norah shook her head gently.

"No, dear. How could I think of anything but you? You must not be unhappy or anxious about me."

The woman sighed.

"You—you will stay here, Norah," she said, and her voice had grown more feeble, "till—till—for a time. The people will look after you as long as you stay. They are fond of you, and kind, and there is money. You have the last quarter's allowance."

Norah tried to soothe her gently.

"Don't trouble about me, Catherine dear."

The woman smiled wistfully.

"There is nothing else that troubles me, only you—only you, dear." The restless, hesitating look came into her eyes, and she moved her head to and fro on the pillow. "Have I done wisely?" she murmured, more to herself than the girl. "God knows! I have done it for the best; but—ah, Norah, if I were only sure!" she gasped.

Norah raised her until her head rested on the soft young bosom.

"It is all so dark, so troubled!" continued the woman. "If I could only tell you—but I cannot, I dare not. Not now! It is too late!"

And she sighed.

"What is it that worries you, Catherine dear?" Is it anything you want to tell me, anything you wish me to do?"

The woman looked at her long and wistfully, with a tenderness which could not have been deeper in a mother's eyes; then she sighed again.

"No," she murmured, as if she had decided. "It is nothing, Norah—nothing I can tell you; but there is something you must do."

"What is it?" asked the girl. "I will do anything, everything you tell me."

"There is a letter under the pillow," said the dying woman faintly.

Norah put her hand under the pillow, and drew out a closed envelope.

"Read—read the address," said Catherine Hayes.

Hastily wiping the tears from her eyes, Norah read it—

The Earl of Arrowdale,
The Court,
Santleigh,
Berks.

At another time she might have expressed surprise, but now there was no room for any emotion but grief.

"The Earl of Arrowdale; yes," said the woman slowly, "you will post it—with your own hand—when—when I am gone; to night, Norah dear?"

"Yes, Catharine," said Norah simply.

The woman looked at her questioningly.

"You don't ask me what it is, Miss Norah?"

The girl shook her head gently.

"Not unless you care to tell me, dear."

"No, I will not tell you; you will know soon I—I——" she struggled as if with some strong emotion, and for the first time her eyes filled with tears. "I can't tell you, Norah, and yet it is so hard—so hard!" And the tears rolled down the wan cheeks. "Norah, say once more 'Catherine, I love you! I will never think badly of you, whatever may happen—whatever may hear. Whatever people say of you, I will love you!'"

Norah bent over, fighting hard with her sobs.

"Catherine, dear, dear Catherine, you know I have loved you, and that I shall always love you, whatever may happen! What can happen to make me so wicked and ungrateful as to forget you, or think of you in any way but as my second mother?"

Catherine Hayes opened her eyes, and fixed them on the girl's face with inexpressible tenderness; then with a sigh they closed, to open no more on this mystery which we call Life.

Norah uttered one cry, and, as if she had been waiting for it as a signal, an old lady opened the door, and came gently to her side.

"Come away, Miss Norah," she said, in a hushed voice. "Come away dear."

The girl kissed the white face, and stood looking down at it for a minute though her blinding tears, then allowed the old lady to lead her from the room.

When the first shock of grief had subsided she became conscious of the letter which she still held in her hand. She got up, and put on her hat, and walked down to the post office in the village. She might have sent it, but she had promised to post it, and she would obey the one and last request which had been made by the woman who, though a servant, had been, as she had said, a mother to her.

A week later an old gentleman in a frock coat and a white hat climbed the narrow path that led to the cottage, and knocked at the little green door.

He was very warm, for the month was June, and the sun blazing in the most gallant fashion, and as he took off his white hat and wiped his bald forehead he puffed and gasped, although he was by no means fat.

"Mrs. Jordan, I believe, ma'am," he said to the old lady who answered the knock.

The old lady bowed and smiled.

"I am Mrs. Jordan, sir," she replied.

"And this, of course, is Cliff Cottage?" he said, raising his hat and fixing his gold eye-glasses. "My name is Petherick, Petherick of Gray's inn, ma'am, and I wish to see Miss Norah Frere."

Mrs. Jordan bowed again.

"Walk in, if you please, sir," she said, opening the door of a neat little parlor. "Miss Frere is out at present, out I am expecting her every moment."

Mr. Petherick walked in, and looked round the small room with keen but not unkindly glance.

It was the best room in a cottage, but it was not without a certain refinement. Two or three modern poets lay on the table, and some etchings of the best masters hung on the walls. There was something about the room that was not only cosy, but tasteful, and with that indefinable tone which is felt though it cannot be described.

"Miss Frere has gone for a walk on the cliffs," said Mrs. Jordan as Mr. Petherick seated himself. "It is so much better for her to be out; indeed, she almost lives in the open air."

"Very healthy, ma'am," said Mr. Petherick, nodding approvingly. "Nothing like fresh air for young people, and old ones, too. But, to tell you the truth, I am rather glad that Miss Frere is out, for, though I have come to see her, I am glad of an opportunity for a little talk with you in her absence."

He coughed a little dry cough behind his hand, and his keen eyes scanned Mrs. Jordan's face. It did not need a very strict scrutiny, for it was perfectly honest and genuine, and, but for its kindness of expression, common-place.

Mr. Petherick's gaze relaxed into a persuasive smile.

"Let me see, my dear lady," he said. "I think Miss Frere has lived here with you for some years?"

"Yes, sir," said Mrs. Jordan, nearly sixteen. She was only four years old when she came, and she is now nearly twenty. Time passes very quickly, sir."

"Yes, ma'am, it does," assented the lawyer. 'Nearly sixteen years." He looked round the room. "Let me see—I've a bad head for dates, ma'am, although I am a lawyer—her mother, Mrs. Frere, died——?" he waited.

"Little more than a twelvemonth after they came to lodge here," replied Mrs. Jordan.

"Yes, yes," he murmured, making a rapid calculation; "and since her mother's death the young lady has been living in the charge, and under the care, so to speak, of her mother's confidential servant—housekeeper—what shall we say?"

Mrs. Jordan inclined her head.

"Mrs. Hayes, yes, sir. A most admirable woman, Mr. Petherick, and—er—much above her class. She was devoted to Miss Norah; I think she would have laid down her life for her at any moment. Poor woman!"

"Yes, yes," said Mr. Petherick in a lowered voice; "and she died a week ago?"

"This day week, sir," assented Mrs. Jordan. "It was a terrible blow to dear Miss Norah—the first, for of course she was too young to feel her mother's loss acutely. A terrible blow, and Miss Norah has suffered a great deal, though she hasn't made much——" She hesitated a moment for a better word than "fuss," but could not find it. "She is not a young lady who gives way to her feeling."

"Oh, indeed," remarked the old lawyer with, as it seemed, an air of relief. "happy—cheerful disposition, eh?"

"Oh, yes, very, sir," replied Mrs. Jordan promptly. "I say she is like a bird about the house, and it's the stopping of her singing and her bright laugh that has made the place seem so dull lately."

"Just so. Ah, yes—ahem," said the lawyer. "Now will you tell me, ma'am—I'm afraid you'll think me very inquisitive—but have you ever heard the young lady or Mrs. Hayes speak of me?"

Mrs. Jordan considered the question.

"N-o, sir," she replied; "I think not."

"Not once, eh? Not just mentioned the name! Petherick and Gregson, of Gray's Inn?"

Mrs. Jordan shook her head.

"I never heard your name mentioned, sir," she said.

He pondered a moment.

"Does Miss Frere see much company, ma'am? Young people are like monkeys—gregarious and fond of chatter, and—and so on."

Mrs. Jordan, though rather resenting the comparison of her beautiful Miss Norah to a monkey, smiled.

"Not much, sir. This is a very quiet place, you see. Sometimes the rector's daughter and sometimes the squire's lady calls, and Miss Norah goes up the rectory or the Manor House to tea, but that is all."

Again the old lawyer looked rather relieved.

"Very good, ma'am," he said. "And now," he glanced through the open window, "I wonder how long Miss Frere will be?"

It was evident that he had asked all the questions and got all the information he wanted, and lawyer-like was anxious to get through with the remainder of the business.

Mrs. Jordan rose.

"Not long, I hope, sir," she said. "Meanwhile I will get you some tea—or perhaps a glass of wine?"

Mr. Petherick, whose cellar was a somewhat famous one, shuddered slightly at the vision of a cheap sherry or a blacking-hued port, and replied briskly—

'Oh, tea, ma'am, tea, thank you very much," and Mrs. Jordan went in search of the single servant.

At that moment a slim figure in a white

dress was coming with a quick springing step up the path on the edge of the cliff She was dressed in a white frock simply and plainly made, with a black sash and a little knot of black on the shoulder, and wore a straw hat that, plain though it was, like her dress, and somewhat tanned by the sun, sat upon her head as gracefully as the dress sat upon her figure.

Within a couple of hundred yards of the cottage she stopped, and leaning upon the rail on the very verge of the cliff looked out to sea, as she had done times out of number, at that very spot, for sixteen years.

The face was thoughtful rather than sad, for grief and youth are soon divorced, and once or twice a smile curved her lips at the antics of the gulls who wheeled screechingly below her.

And yet though she smiled she was thinking of the dead woman who had been so devoted a servant, so tender a second mother to her—and thinking also of her own lonely lot.

Thinking, too, of the letter which she posted, and wondering who the Earl of Arrowdale might be, and why Catherine had written to him.

The dying woman had hinted, in broken sentences, of something which she might tell Norah; had this something any connection with the earl?

The question rose in a vague form only, and with little of earnestness in it, for her life had been so uneventful, so changeless, that she was not on the look out for surprises or mysteries, as persons with more active lives are wont to be.

For sixteen years she had lived in the little cottage on the cliff, content with her quiet life, happy in the beauty of the place, serene in the protection of the devoted Catherine, and for herself "in maiden meditation fancy free."

Life was still a sealed book to her, and she was scarcely even curious about it.

After a time she left the gulls, and reaching the cottage passed through the tiny hall and entered the parlor.

Mr. Petherick had been standing looking at one of the etchings, and swinging round as she entered uttered an involuntary exclamation of surprise and admiration.

Even to the dry, matter-of-fact old lawyer she seemed rather an ethereal vision there in the sunshine than flesh and blood, and he stared at the lovely oval face with its dark eyes and sweeping lashes, the wealth of auburn—red gold—hair, and the slim girlish figure with its graceful outlines, in speechless astonishment.

A faint blush rose to Norah's face though the dark eyes rested on him with "maiden serenity," and she was the first to speak.

"I beg your pardon, she said.

And 'Great Heaven, what a sweet voice!" flashed through the old man's mind.

"I did not know anyone was here," and she turned to go.

'Stop—I beg—" he said with a little flurried bow, whereas she was perfectly calm and self-possessed. "You are Miss—Frere?"

"Yes," assented Norah, with a faint hesitation.

"I—I thought so," he said, struggling bravely to surpass all further signs of surprise. "Yes! My name is Petherick—Petherick and Gregson, of Gray's Inn, and I—er—in fact, Miss Frere, I have come down to see you."

"To see me?" said Norah, and the beautiful eyes grew larger.

"Yes—ahem," he drew a chair forward for her. "Will you not sit down?" On business."

Norah sat down, and, with her hands clasped closely on her lap, looked at him with grave patience.

"It's—it's nothing to be alarmed at," he hastened to remark, for the sweet gravity rather discomposed him.

"I am not alarmed," said Norah, a faint smile sweeping over her face like sunlight, causing the old lawyer to mutter—

"Heaven! The most lovely creature!"

"I'm—I'm glad to hear it," he said aloud. "Ladies, young ladies especially, are generally frightened at the very sound of the word," and he laughed uneasily.

"Yes?" she said thoughtfully. "But I know nothing of business, and so——"

"Just so, just so," he broke in with a little cough, his eyes still seeming dazzled by her beauty and her serenity. "You have never heard of me, Miss Frere?"

"I am afraid not," said Norah, after a moment's pause.

He coughed again.

"I thought perhaps that you might have done so, that Mrs. Hayes——"

Norah's lips quivered and her eyes were veiled for a moment, and her slight wince upset Mr. Petherick terribly.

"I—I beg your pardon!" He glanced at the white dress and black sash. "You feel your loss—yes, yes; dear me, yes! Ahem! You were very much attached to her, Miss Frere?"

Norah made no reply, and he hurried on. "Of course, of course. Poor woman! Most devoted to you, Mrs.—Mrs. Jordan tells me. Sad loss, very, very!"

Norah waited in silence as he finished his condolences.

"And she never mentioned me to you?"

"No," said Norah quietly.

"And—ahem," he coughed again. It was evident that he experienced some difficulty in proceeding to the business he had alluded to. "And she did not tell you anything else?"

"Anything else?" repeated Norah gently. "I don't understand——"

Mr. Petherick wiped his forehead with a perplexed and embarrassed air.

"I thought that she might have made some communication to you before she—died," he suggested.

Norah shook her head.

"No," she said; then as she recalled—ah, how vividly!—the dead woman's last words, she added, "No, she told me nothing. I think—" she paused a moment—"I think that she wished to tell me something, and that she tried, but she did not."

"Dear me; yes, yes," said Mr. Petherick. "And a message now? Did she give you any message to deliver to—say, anyone?"

"No," replied Norah. "She asked me to post a letter which she had written, that was all."

"A letter, yes," he said, seizing the opening thus afforded, and bending forward with a little less embarrassment. "A letter to—"

"To the Earl of Arrowdale," said Norah, seeing that he waited.

"Ex—actly," he murmured. "Now, have you any knowledge, any idea of the contents of that letter?"

Norah shook her head.

'No, no idea at all."

"Hem," he commented. "I think I ought to tell you at once that I am Lord Arrowdale's solicitor, Miss Frere."

"Yes?" said Norah, quite simply. She was only faintly curious.

"Yes." He paused a moment, then went on as if he had done with the subject. "And may I ask, Miss Frere, if you have formed any plans for your future?"

"Any plans?" repeated Norah, and her dark brows almost met over the lovely eyes as she looked at him with faint trouble and surprise. "No, I have formed no plans; I—I did not know that any were necessary. I thought that I should go on living here as I have done, and——" She stopped.

He nodded.

"You are quite happy here?" he asked.

"Oh, yes, yes," she assented, with a little sigh. 'Quite happy."

"Mrs. Jordan is kind and—ahem—all that?"

"Yes," said Norah; "I have always lived here since I was a child."

"I see; and have grown attached to the place. It is very quiet."

"Yes, and very beautiful, she said, more to herself than to him, and her eyes wandered to the open window.

"I see; attached to Mrs. Jordan and fond of the place. Upon my word it is a pity."

The last sentence was not intended for Norah, but her ears were quick, and she turned her eyes upon him with a surprised questioning that made him cough again.

'I mean—dear me!—that—that perhaps it would be as well to let well alone. Certainly for your sake."

Norah still looked at him, puzzled and uncertain, and he hurried on.

"This—this life is a life of change, Miss Frere, a life of changes and surprises. You would say that you had not found it so, but yours is an exceptional, a very exceptional case, believe me. And you do not know the Earl of Arrowdale, to whom your nurse, Mrs. Hayes, wrote?" he asked with sudden abruptness.

"No," said Norah, still more astonished by the question and its abruptness. "Until I saw his name upon the envelope of the letter I did not know such a person existed."

"Dear me," he said aloud. Then he muttered, "Confound it, how shall I tell her with those eyes of hers fixed on me like—like gimlets?"—which they certainly were not. "Dear me, that is so strange, because you see, my dear Miss Frere, the earl knows you so well."

"Knows me?" said Norah, her eyes opening still larger, to Mr. Petherick's increased embarrassment. "I think you must be mistaken. I am sure that I have never seen him nor heard of him till now."

"No, I should have said that the earl knew of you—of you. There is a difference, is there not? And—and to put it abruptly, which I have been trying not to do all this time, it is by his request, I should say command, that I am here to-day."

"By the command of the Earl of Arrowdale?" said Norah.

"Yes; his lordship takes a very great interest in you. In fact—ahem; you have no other name than Norah—Norah Frere, I believe?"

A vague suspicion began to assail Norah that her strange visitor was slightly demented.

She shook her head.

"Did you ever hear your mother speak of your father, Miss Frere?" he asked.

"No," said Norah in a low voice; "I think he is dead."

Mr. Petherick pursed his lips and frowned.

"Now we are coming to it," he muttered. "My dear young lady, your father is not dead; in fact—ahem—he is very much alive. I thought it likely that you may have learned that he and your mother were separated—from no fault of your mother's," he added, as the beautiful face grew suddenly pale, and the dark eyes became moist; "no fault of hers whatever. Er—incompatibility of temper. Yes, I may say, with all due respect to my noble client, that any woman would have found it difficult to live with him. Your father, the earl——"

Norah rose pale and agitated.

"What did you say?" she breathed. "My father, the earl——"

"Well, I've let it out now, thank Heaven!" exclaimed Mr. Petherick. "Yes, my dear young lady, your father is the Earl of Arrowdale. Come, come, it has surprised and upset you, I know, and—and I might have broken it better; though, 'pon my word, I did my best. Will you sit down? Pray sit down."

Norah sank into the chair and put her hand before her eyes. Her brain was in a whirl, and she almost doubted the evidence of her senses.

She, the daughter of an earl! Surely there must be some mistake.

Mr. Petherick coughed and fidgeted for a minute or two, then he took up his parable.

"You see, Lady Norah——"

Lady Norah! Norah let her hand fall from her eyes and looked at him. She was still pale, but she had mastered her emotion, or, at least, any signs of it, and the dark eyes turned upon the old lawyer were full of sweet dignity and patience.

'You see, the secret has been kept so well—I really don't think anyone knew of your existence or identity, excepting the earl and your mother, and the nurse, Mrs.—Mrs.——"

"Catherine Hayes," surmised Norah.

"Thank you, yes; and myself, of course—that it is only natural you should be surprised. But I beg you will not distress yourself or feel any alarm. The earl has nothing but the—ahem—kindest intentions, and, indeed, is—er—anxious to see you. Heaven forgive me," he added inaudibly. 'To see me?" said Norah; "he has never seen me."

Mr. Petherick coughed awkwardly.

"N o, no; he has not. You were born a few months after the separation, and—and circumstances—in fact, as you say, the earl has not seen you."

"Why does he wish to see me now?" asked Norah in a low voice, her lip quivering.

"Well, his lordship having become aware, by the letter of your nurse, Mrs. Hayes, of your lonely condition, has decided that you should go and live with him."

Norah flushed.

"Go and live with him," she said slowly.

"Yes. He is your father, my dear Lady Norah," said Mr. Petherick, "and—and though I have no doubt you would be quite content to remain here with this extremely amiable old lady, Mrs. Jordan, still—ar—really, I think the arrangement the earl proposes is only the natural and proper one, and I—er—trust you will find it a happy one." But though Mr. Petherick smiled and nodded, his cough and a certain compression of the lips were scarcely encouraging.

"My father wishes it?" said Norah, her brows drawn in a straight line.

"You may be sure of that, Lady Norah. I can assure you that the earl never did anything he didn't wish to—" He stopped awkwardly. "Oh, yes, certainly."

"Where does he live?" asked Norah.

"At present, indeed for a greater part of the year, at Santleigh Court, a most beautiful place, oh, beautiful! and—er—" he took out his old-fashioned watch, "I think, if it is not hurrying you too much, we must think of starting, say, in an hour."

"In an hour!" exclaimed Norah.

Mr. Petherick smiled and nodded encouragingly.

"Yes. My instructions were to return as quickly as possible. His lordship's commands were explicit, and—ahem—one is accustomed to obey them. No need to trouble about packing, Lady Norah; that is, more than you want for the journey. The other things can follow you."

Norah rose, her hand resting on the table, her face pale, her eyes fixed on the nervously blinking ones of the old lawyer.

"I have never heard of my father till now; my mother never spoke of him—he could have been nothing to her; suppose I were to refuse to—to go to him?"

Mr. Petherick fell back and stared aghast.

"God bless my soul!" he exclaimed in an almost awe-struck whisper. "Refuse! Oh, my dear young lady, such a thing is not to be thought of. You—it is evident that you do not know, have not heard of your father. Oh, please, for my sake, go and get ready, Lady Norah," and he mopped his face with his handkerchief.

She stood as if thinking deeply for a moment, then she raised her head.

"I will go," she said; and Mr. Petherick drew a long breath of relief as she left the room, and he muttered—

"Bless my soul! There'll be trouble between those two. Oh, Lord, I'm sorry for her. Yes, there'll be trouble!"

CHAPTER II.

THE Earl of Arrowdale was beautiful to look at, beautiful to listen to, and as highly polished as the Koh-i-noor. He had been known for years as the modern Chesterfield, and society was proud of him, as an instance of what noble rank and high breeding can produce.

He was tall and thin, with a face in which every feature was as clearly and cleanly cut as if it had been done by a Grecian sculptor, and on which a beard or moustache had never been allowed even to suggest itself.

At this period his hair was nearly white, but otherwise the face was almost without a wrinkle, and the figure was so well preserved that it was at once the admiration and astonishment of all who were privileged to gaze upon it.

In speech, Howarde, Lord Arrowdale was, so it is said, a model of grace and eloquence for these degenerate times; his voice soft and yet distinct, and capable of any modulation. In manners—but the pen falters in its endeavors to convey an idea of Lord Arrowdale's manners.

Lord Palmerston, who had employed him in foreign service, had been heard to declare that Arrowdale's voice would melt a Red Indian, and his manners move a Tartar.

No one had ever seen him in that vulgar frame of mind known as "a temper." When angry—and even he had been angry at some periods of his polished existence—his voice usually grew softer and his smile sweeter. Once, when a young man, a woman had struck him across the face—with or without cause, probably with—and in the presence of others. They had waited to see what he would do, and were moved to admiration when he caught the hand that struck him, and raising it to his lips murmured with a smile, 'Rather a blow from you than a kiss from another"; and in their admiration the onlookers probably forgot that he had wronged the woman or as probably considered that his exquisite manners had more than atoned for it.

As a young man, the noble earl had been wild and reckless, with a society polished wildness; but of late years he had subsided into the middle aged but ever youthful man of retired habits and studious tastes.

And he was still the model to which parents pointed when they wished to impress upon their sons a type of what a man should be who was made by manners.

It is true that there were ribald invalids who had been known to jeer at him, and even to go so far as to call him the Superfine Earl; but if he was aware of these—and it was very little he was not aware of—Lord Arrowdale went on his way serene, smiling, and unmoved.

On the evening of the day after that on which Mr. Petherick had paid his visit to Cliff Cottage, Norton, the earl had a small dinner party.

He had asked the guests before he had received the letter from Catherine Hayes, and, notwithstanding it was the day he was to receive the daughter he had not yet seen, he had not postponed his little party.

"Never put off a dinner, however unimportant, unless there be a death in the family or small-pox in the house," was one of his maxims.

And exactly at a quarter to eight o'clock

he left the hands of his valet, exquisitely dressed, upright as a dart, with every white hair in place, without a crease in his shirt front or scarcely a wrinkle on his face, and with the clean cut lips just curved with the smile which, if he had labelled his smiles, would probably have been numbered, "No. 2 Smile for the reception of one's guests."

Santleigh Court was an old and as unimpeachable in the way of ancestry as its owner. Originally the residence of a Norman baron—of course an Arrowdale—it had been transformed by successive owners into one of the most magnificent of our English palace-mansions.

It would have been a show place like Chatsworth or Eaton Hall, if the noble earl could have brought himself to endure the thought of the presence of plebeian tourists in the lofty corridors and stately hall; but the mere idea caused him to shudder, and the guide books always put their descriptions of the place a footnote: "Strangers are not permitted to pass the park gates."

The earl made his way down the broad stairs—up which one might have driven a coach and four with ease, so far as breadth goes—with the slow and stately grace peculiar to him, and was passing into the drawing-room when the footman approached, and in subdued tones said—

"Mr. Petherick has arrived, my lord."

His lordship inclined his head slightly—his courtesy extended to the lowest menial in his service.

"Thank you. In the library?"

"In the library, my lord."

The earl turned said and entered the oak-paneled library, and held out his white and delicately-shaped hand.

"Ah, Petherick," he said with a smile, "the smile to be used when greeting the family lawyer'; "a safe journey, I trust. You will be in time for dinner. We do not dine until a quarter past, and I have a few friends. The heat has subsided a little, has it not? I fear you must have suffered much inconvenience from it."

Mr. Petherick coughed.

"Thank you, my lord; yes, it has been hot. I have returned my lord, and—and Lady Norah has accompanied me."

The earl raised his eyebrows slightly,

"Norah. Do you spell it with the "h" or without?" he asked blandly.

The lawyer coughed again.

"E—with the "h" I believe, my lord."

"Ah, yes. It is a musical name; Irish—or Celtic at any rate, is it not?"

As Mr. Petherick did not know he merely bowed. He knew the earl to well to expect him to exclaim. "My daughter here! Bring her to my arms!" but he was rather startled and embarrassed at this peculiar reception.

"I do not think we have had the name in the family before. Norah, yes, it is not unmusical. I am infinitely obliged to you for all the trouble you have taken, Petherick, and believe me I quite realize how excessive it must have been."

"Not at all, my lord," said Mr. Petherick. "I may say that it has afforded me much pleasure. Lady Norah—"

The earl glanced at his watch.

"Pardon me," he said, interrupting him. "Would you kindly ring the bell?"

Mr. Petherick did so, and a footman entered.

"My compliments to Lady Norah, and I shall be gratified if she will dine with me at a quarter past eight."

Mr. Petherick grew red.

"Eh—ahem—I beg a thousand pardons, lord, but I—I—am afraid Lady Norah will be tired, and scarcely—that is—I think you said, my lord, that you had a dinner party?"

The earl smiled sweetly.

"Take my message to Lady Norah, please," he said to the footman, who instantly and noiselessly disappeared; then he turned to his companion.

"Thank you for your consideration, Petherick," he said blandly. "I see you desire to spare me a—shall I say shock?—but believe me, I am quite prepared. I am not exacting, and I do not expect grapes from thistles. I am also resolved that as Lady Norah is here under my roof, my acknowledged daughter, I will not permit myself to be—it is an ugly word, but I can find no other—ashamed of her!"

Mr. Petherick grew redder, and he opened his mouth as if he were about to make some eager response, but he thought better of it.

"I hope you will have no cause to be ashamed of Lady Norah, my lord," he said slowly.

"Thank you very much. I trust not. But as I said, I am prepared for the worst. A girl brought up as she has been——" He stopped. "But my dear Petherick, I am detaining you, and will cause you to hurry your toilet."

Mr. Petherick bowed and left the room without a word, but when he reached the hall he looked round and suffered himself to mutter his favorite ejaculation, "Bless my soul!"

The earl went into the drawing-room, a magnificent salon, richly decorated with gold upon ivory white by Inigo Jones, and stood in a graceful attitude awaiting his guests.

If he felt any curiosity respecting this daughter upon whom his eyes were to rest for the first time, certainly no trace of it was to be seen in his face as he took up an orchid from a vase and examined it with as pleased and devoted attention as if his mind were entirely free from any more pressing matter.

Presently some of the guests arrived.

The footman announced Lord Ferndale, whose estate joined Santleigh, an old and genial man with a loud voice, which made Lord Arrowdale's sound the sweeter and softer by contrast; Mr. Parfleet, a neighboring squire; and the rector.

Lord Arrowdale always attended church every Sunday morning, subscribed to all the local charities, and as he would have put it, "supported the clergy."

He shook hands with them, murmured a few graceful words of welcome, then glanced at his watch.

"We are waiting for two others," he said softly; "I expect Guildford Berton."

"Ah, well, he is always punctual," said the rector with the chuckle which accompanied nearly every remark; and indeed as he spoke the door opened and the footman announced the gentleman alluded to.

He was a tall, thin young man, with a sallow face, and hair and eyes of a darkness seldom found in an Englishman. They were fine eyes, seemed to light up his face and render its sallowness almost unnoticeable, and they flashed for a moment round the room and from face to face before he uttered a word. Then he came forward and greeted the earl, and his voice was almost as soft and sweetly pitched as his host's.

The earl's glance rested upon the dark face and carefully attired figure with a momentary approval, and there was a touch of cordiality and familiarity in his voice as he spoke to him which had been absent when he addressed his other guests.

"Ah, Guildford. We were lauding your punctuality. The air is somewhat cooler this evening, I trust?"

"Yes," said Guildford Berton. "But I walked slowly. I hope I have not kept you waiting."

"There was a foreign accent in his speech, and he seemed to utter every word carefully, as if he weighed it and watched it as it passed.

"No," said the earl, "we are waiting now for Lady Norah."

Lord Ferndale, who was standing near, regarding the young man with a not altogether approving countenance, turned to the earl with surprise.

"Lady—Norah!" he said.

It was a bachelor's party, and the announcement of a guest of the other sex startled him. The rector and Mr. Parfleet stopped suddenly in the middle of their gossip, and also turned towards the earl.

He stood bland and smiling, looking at them, one white hand touching caressingly the flower in his buttonhole, the other hanging gracefully at his side, and only the black eyes of Guildford Berton were acute enough to detect something malicious and self-torturing beneath the smile and the veneered ease.

"I beg your pardon," he said, "I ought to have said 'my daughter, Lady Norah.'"

Lord Ferndale started, and the rector and Mr. Parfleet exchanged glances. They remembered the earl's marriage, and the quickly following separation, but they had known nothing of the daughter.

The earl seemed in a courteous fashion to enjoy their surprise.

"You are astonished, Guildford?" he said, addressing the young man whose eyes were fixed upon him. "You were not aware that I was even married. Our good friends could have told you the story"—he waved his hand slightly towards the three other silent men. "Not at all a new or original one, but not without its touch of romance. A foolish and high-flown youth and an unsophisticated girl." He spoke as calmly and blandly as if he were talking of someone else's marriage rather than his own. "Romantic but disastrous. It may serve as a warning to you, my dear Guildford. We will not go into details; suffice it that the foolish youth and the unsophisticated girl speedily discovered that the god Love is more mortal and less lasting than poor humanity, and—they parted. Really I think it was the wisest thing they could do. You agree with me rector?"

The rector bowed and colored, and the earl, after delicately wiping his lips with his exquisitely fine handkerchief, went on in the same bland, smooth voice.

"They parted. It was very sad, and very—disappointing. But—what would you have? Life is too short to permit of two persons spending it in quarrelling." He shuddered palpably.

"But—but your daughter?" said Lord Ferndale.

"Ah, yes, pardon me, I had forgotten! Yes, I have a daughter, born after the separation; consequently I have not seen her"—he said it as if it were quite a matter of course. "But her mother and her nurse, and I believe, most attached and devoted servant being dead, her care devolves upon me."

There was a pause. Everybody tried to find something to say, and failed, though Lord Ferndale did murmur inaudibly, 'Poor girl."

"I may say," said the earl quite pleasantly, 'that I have not seen her yet, and that I am sharing your curiosity. She arrived this afternoon."

The men exchanged glances, all but Guildford Berton, who kept his dark eyes fixed on the floor.

"I cannot even tell you what she is like, but I trust you will find her charming," and he spoke the words as if he had added "and I am quite sure you won't."

There was a painful silence, broken by the entrance of Mr. Petherick.

The earl looked at the clock.

"We will not wait," he said suavely.

Mr. Petherick coughed.

"I expect Lady Norah is too tired," he stammered.

The earl smiled upon him, and motioned Lord Ferndale to lead the way.

They entered the dining-room, and the earl walked straight to the bottom of the table, waved his guests to their seats, and the rector said grace.

He had scarcely resumed his seat when the two footmen ranged themselves on either side of the door, and Norah entered.

She wore the soft, white dress with the black sash and shoulder ribbon, in which Mr. Petherick had first seen her; her face was pale, but that and the faintest quiver of the beautiful lips were the only signs that she felt the ordeal which her exquisitive father had compelled her to undergo.

The men started and rose, looking at her in breathless silence. The earl was the first to gain his feet, and he, too, stared for a moment, as silent as the rest.

He had expected to see a shy, timid, underbred girl, half dairy maid, half—he scarcely knew what. At any rate, something that would try all his self-possession and immovable serenity.

Instead——!

For a moment a faint color rose to his face, and all his boasted impassiveness broke down before this graceful young creature with the lovely face and wealth of red gold hair, who stood waiting like a princess for homage. Then he left the table, and taking her hand with a bow, turned to his dumfounded guests.

"Gentlemen!" he said slowly and in his sweetest voice, "permit me to introduce you to my daughter!"

And still holding her hand, he conducted her with stately but ice-like courtesy to the head of the table.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

THE MOTHER.—Have you a mother? If so, honor and love her. If she is aged, do all in your power to cheer her declining years. Her hair may have bleached, her eyes may have dimmed, her brow may contain deep and unsightly furrows, her cheeks may be sunken; but you should not forget the holy love and tender care she has had for you. In years gone by she has kissed away from your cheek the troubled tear; she has soothed and petted you when all else appeared against you; she has watched over and nursed you with a tender care known only to a mother; she has sympathized with you in adversity; she has been proud of your success. You may be despised by all around you, yet that loving mother stands as an apologist for all your shortcomings. With all that disinterested affection, would it not be ungrateful in you if in her declining years you failed to reciprocate her love, and honor her as your best tried friend? We have no respect for a man or woman who neglects an aged mother. If you have a mother, do all in your power to make her happy.

It is generally the idle who complain that they cannot find time to do that which they fancy they wish.

Bric-a-Brac.

A BIG-WINGED BIRD.—The Albatross, is a member of the well-known Petrel family. It chiefly frequents the southern seas of the globe, and is found farther from land than any other bird. The spread of its wings being from twelve to fifteen feet, we need not be surprised that the albatross is unrivalled for the strength, grace, and ease of its flight. This was the bird that was shot by Coleridge's "Ancient Mariner," and whose death was the cause of all the woes related in the famous ballad of that name.

THE WEDDING RING.—It was formerly the custom, especially among the Greeks and the early inhabitants of the British Isles, to wear the wedding ring on the forefinger, but the rule at length prevailed of placing the ring on the finger next to the little one on the left hand, known as the annulary finger (from the Latin annulus, a ring). This was because, according to the opinion of some of the Eastern nations, a small nerve runs from this finger to the heart, a theory which has been entirely disproved by modern medical science.

ODD SIGNS.—Curious signs noticed in Iowa and Nebraska by a travelling man: Omaha barber shop: 'Foam on bed 5c extra." Columbus, Neb., depot: "Gentlemen keep out ladies' room." Norfolk, Neb., real estate office: 'There are no flies on my land." Norfolk butcher shop: "We won't give no tick." Norfolk insurance agent's sign: "All small fry agents in this town but us." Lawyer's advertisement on hand bill in Gordon, Neb.: 'Legal work promptly executed and divorces cheerfully granted." Gordon hotel: "Horses and men accomodated."

WHERE THE COCKROACH CAME FROM.—The common cockroach, so familiar in our kitchens, is not a native of this country, but was originally imported from Asia, about two hundred years ago. It is perhaps needless to say that the cockroaches were not purposely brought here, but came over as "stowaways" on board vessels trading with Eastern ports. For a long time they were only to be found in town houses, but notwithstanding their horror of cold and cold journeys, they at length contrived to found colonies all over the country.

THE IVORY PLANT.—In the northern portions of South America there grows a curious tree, which is popularly called the ivory plant from the uses to which its hard white stainless seeds are put. Its graceful pale green palm-like leaves are often twenty feet long and, with the fruit, are so heavy that they weigh the slender trunk down to the ground, where it lies as if it were real y the exposed root of some larger tree. The fruit consists of a big ball, formed of six or seven packets, each holding from six to nine seeds. These seeds are the vegetable ivory from which buttons, beads, bones, toys, and other articles are made.

KEEPING COUNT.—The bakers in Poitiers, France, have a rather original system of keeping accounts, which may be called a kind of book-keeping by double entry. When the carrier delivers a loaf of bread, which, by the way, is about five or six feet long, he is handed a wooden lath about a foot long by the party to whom he delivers the bread. From a collection of laths of the same size, one for each customer, he picks out this particular customer's one, and, placing the two parallel, he cuts a grove across the face of both. In the final adjustment of accounts both laths have to have the same number of notches.

THE HUMAN HAND.—Starting with the idea that the hand varies sensibly in size with the amount of blood present in it at any moment, an Italian physiologist has made interesting investigations. In his first experiments the hand was placed in a closed vessel of water, when the change in the circulation produced by the slightest action of the body or brain, the smallest thought or movement, was shown by a rise or fall of the liquid in the narrow neck of the vessel. With a large balance, on which the horizontal human body may be poised, he found that one's thoughts may literally weighed, and that even dreams, or the effect of a slight sound during slumber, turn the blood to the brain sufficiently to sink the balance at the head. The changing pulse even told him when a professional friend was reading Italian and when Greek, the greater effort for the latter duly affecting the blood flow.

If thou wouldst exercise authority without giving offence, control thy passions.

I THINK OF THEE.

BY S. VINCENT.

I think of thee when moonlight hours
Shed silvery radiance all around,
When evening dews hang on the flowers,
And hush'd is each discordant sound.

Thine image haunts each peaceful scene;
With thee, once more, I linger long,
Listening to Love's entrancing dream,
While sweetest memories round me throng.

And though my life must lonely be,
And Fortune's frowns my hopes destroy,
If thou will aye remember me,
My heart demands no other joy.

HEART AND RING.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "NULL AND VOID," "MADAM'S WARD," "THE HOUSE IN THE CLOSE," "WHITE BERRIES AND RED," "ONLY ONE LOVE," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

YES, IT WAS HIS FACE, but how altered! Pale and haggard it looked as if as many years as minutes had passed over it since she saw it last in all its bright, fresh youthfulness, and it was the shock caused by this change in the beloved face, as much as the sudden appearance which kept her rooted to the spot.

She could not have moved if her life had depended on it, and he was almost upon her before he noticed her. Then raising his hat he murmured:

"Pardon, senorita," and was going on, when looking more closely at her, he uttered an exclamation, and stood like herself stock still.

For a space in which one could count twenty these two stood looking into each other's eyes speechless, then he said:

"Doris!"

And stretching out his arms, made a step towards her.

For a second the desire to sink upon his breast was terrible, but she fought against it and shrank back.

The color which had rushed to his face as he spoke her name died away at her gesture of repudiation, and letting his arms drop to his side he said in a constrained voice:

"Miss Marlowe! Am I dreaming? Doris, is it you?"

"Yes, it is I," she said, almost inaudibly, her heart beating so loudly in her ears as almost to drown her voice.

"You! You!" he repeated, looking round as if he could not believe the evidence of his senses. "You, and here! Good Heavens, I thought I was dreaming! I—I thought you were—when did you come here?" he broke off as if he scarcely knew what he was saying.

His eyes devoured her face with the expression in them which might shine in the eyes of a man who, dying of thirst, sees the limpid stream—just beyond his reach.

"I—I came here, to Italy, some months ago, my lord," she said, and her voice sounded strange and hollow.

"Some months, some months?" he repeated, putting his hand to his head and pushing the hair from his forehead.

A trick which Doris remembered with a vividness which was like a stab.

"Why, how could that be? You could not get back from Australia—and yet, yes, I suppose so!"

She started and looked at him, and was about to exclaim:

"Australia? I have never been there, my lord!"

She thought a second, then remembering the marquis's story, remained silent.

"You—you did not stay long," he said. "Were you, are you happy?" he asked abruptly.

She turned her head away; her lips quivering at the dull accents of pain in his voice.

"Few mortals are happy," she replied, in a low voice.

He waved his hand impatiently.

"For Heaven's sake don't address me as if we were strangers!" he broke out. "It is a farce in which I find it impossible to play! Doris, are you so hard of heart, or so light of memory, that you can forget, absolutely forget, all that passed between us—you and I? Have you forgotten Barton meadows? the day I fell off the horse at your feet? the day I told you that I loved you, and asked you to be my wife? the day you promised to be my wife?"

She shrank back against the wall, and put her hands against it as if to sustain her and keep her from falling.

"Have you clean forgotten?" he demanded bitterly.

"I have tried to forget," she panted at last.

"Oh, Heaven!" he exclaimed, with suppressed passion; "and they say that women have hearts, they boast that women are gentle and merciful! You tried to forget; and, of course, you succeeded! While I ——" he drew near to her and looked longingly at her pale face, all the loveller for its pallor and the intense light shining in the beautiful eyes, the tremor on the perfectly carved lips; "while I have thought of you day by day, night by night. I swear that there is not a night in which I have not dreamed of you, in which you have not stood beside me to mock me with those eyes of yours to murmur the vows which fell so readily from those sweet lips. Great Heavens, how cruel how merciless even the best of you can be!"

In the fury of his agony it almost seemed as if he were about to strike her with his upraised hand, and Doris felt a wild thrill run through her as the conviction that he still loved her forced itself upon her.

"He loves me still! He loves me still!" she almost cried aloud.

"Yes, the best of you," he repeated dully, like a man whose sense was half numbed with pain. "For I counted you the best, and—Heaven help me!—I still count you so! Doris—I don't know by what name I should call you, but till I die you will be 'Doris' to me—Doris, why did you deceive me? I have lain awake at night trying to answer that question. I ask you to tell me now, now that all is over between us——" and he bit his lips till the blood came as he gazed at the lovely, downcast face. "All is over and we are miles apart, worlds apart," and he stifled a groan, "and you can tell me safely. Why did you treat me as you did? Was it simple devilry, coquettry, what? What fun, amusement, was there in it? They say you were practising your profession upon me, that I was a mere block, which you were acting—always acting—up to. Was that true?"

She made no reply, but stood statue-like her hands pressed against the rough wall, her heart beating in dull, heavy throbs which seemed to stifle her.

"Was it true? If so, then you were the wickedest, the cruellest woman God ever made!" he said fiercely. "There are some women whose trade it is—professed flirts—to fool and betray men; but they carry the sign of their trade on faces and voices, and we men are aware of them. But you—you, with that innocent face of yours, with those eyes whose truth a man might stake his soul upon——" he stopped and gazed at her as if his soul were slipping from him: "Why don't you answer me?" he broke off almost savagely.

Her dry lips quivered, a longing so intense as to be almost irresistible assailed her; the desire to exclaim: "I did not deceive you; I did love you; I still love you. No treachery of mine parted us!" but she remembered the promise she had made to Percy Levant, the promise renewed only that morning; remembered that he, Lord Cecil, was either already married, or pledged to marry Lady Grace, and she remained silent.

He drew a long breath and shrugged his shoulders.

"You can't answer. I suppose it was merely for amusement that you led me on to loving you, merely for amusement that you got the heart out of my bosom, merely for amusement that you promised to be my wife, and still merely for amusement—broke my heart!"

She turned. They say the worm will turn if trodden on too persistently.

"Was it only a broken heart you offered to Lady Grace, my lord?" she said. The moment after she had spoken the words she would have recalled them, for she saw by the sudden pallor of his face, the quiver of his lips, how much they had cost him.

"I see," he said in a low voice; "you seek to excuse yourself of unfaithfulness by accusing me!"

"No, no," she breathed; but he went on, disregarding her.

"Yes, I am engaged to Lady Grace! It is quite true. All the world knows it," with a suppressed bitterness; "but I did not ask her to be my wife until you had—jilted—me! Jilted! It is too light a word. Men use it as a jest. But you did not jilt, you deserted and betrayed me!"

"I—I!" she panted.

"Yes!" he said passionately. "You waited until I had left England—left England to please and conciliate my uncle—and then, disregarding my letters, my appeals to your love and your honor, you coldly—like a finished coquette!—cast me off with a few cold words. Good Heavens, I cannot recall it without feeling the old pain, the old madness!" he broke off. "Oh, Doris, you have broken other hearts than mine, I daresay, but you never broke one that loved you half as dearly, half as truly, as mine did! I would have staked my life, my honor, on your truthfulness. I would have upheld it in the face of the whole world, and," with a bitter smile, "should have been rightly laughed at for my pains! Doris, the treachery that was sport to you, was death to me! Look at me!" he drew nearer to her, and folded his arms. "That day I lay with my head in your lap I was a young man, with all a young man's keen zest for life, with all a young man's keen desire for life and belief in happiness! I feel like and old man now, bereft of all hope, haunted by the memory of your deceit. This is your work! Be proud of it, if you can!"

She hid her face in her hands lest it should tell him too much, and he mistook the gesture and attitute for a confession of her guilt, and it moved him to a softer mood.

"I—I beg your pardon," he stammered. "Don't—for Heaven's sake—don't cry! That won't do any good. I'm awfully sorry I should have blsred out what I felt. It's—it's all past and gone now. Of course you are married?"

Her lips formed the word "no," though it was not audible.

"No!" he exclaimed, and the blood rushed to his face. "Not married! Then you are still Doris Marlowe, still Doris—the Doris I think and dream of——"

He laid his hand on the wall and bent over her trembling visibly.

"Not married! Why—why—I don't understand! I thought—that is—Doris ——" a strange change in his voice smote upon her ears suddenly, a tone of wild, mad hope. "Doris, I thought you were utterly lost to me! That you were married! Why have you not married?"

She remained silent, and the color came and went on his face, and his eyes flashed.

"Why, Doris. You must answer me! Is it because—ah, no! you can't have remembered—and yet—— You are still Doris Marlowe! The dear, sweet Doris who won my heart in Barton meadows! Doris—you—you—drive me almost mad! The mere sight of you wipes out all the weary months since we parted! You are free still? Free? By Heaven, I can scarcely believe it!"

He drew nearer, panting heavily like a man who suddenly dares entertain the hope that dawns upon him.

"Not married! Doris, do you remember? Let me look at your face! Why do you turn away from me? Are you playing with me still? If you are not married there must be some reason! Great Heavens! don't deceive, don't betray me now! Listen! I, too, am free! I will be free! I'd give up all the world for your sake! Doris, listen to me! It may not be—it may not be too late!"

He was bending over her so closely now, that she could feel his breath upon her cheek; an awful, a terrible languor was creeping over her; if he had caught her in his arms, and touched her lips with his, she could not have resisted.

Love, the all-powerful god, was pleading with her for this, the only man she had ever loved, and she was conscious that she was yielding—yielding.

"Tell me, Doris; tell me again!" he exclaimed passionately. "It may not be too late! You are not married; and I thought—they told me— My darling, my love, my Doris——"

His hand was upon her arm, his lips close to her face, his breath stirred her hair; she felt powerless to move; in another moment she would, by no consent of her own, have been in his arms, when, suddenly, she felt herself drawn from him, and a voice said in calm, clear accents,—

"Lord Cecil Neville, I believe?"

Cecil drew himself up to his full height.

"My name is Neville," he said haughtily.

Percy Levant slowly and gently drew Doris's arm within his.

"So I imagined, my lord," he said, not sternly nor haughty, but with a calm—almost judicial—gravity. "I could have wished that our meeting could have been under freer circumstances," and he nodded significantly; "but as it is, allow me to introduce myself! My name is Levant—Percy Levant!"

Lord Cecil gave the short military bow which is half a nod and half an obeisance, and glanced at Doris, who leant upon Percy Levant's arm, and hung her head; her quivering lips and pallid face bearing evidence to the emotions which wrung her heart.

"Yes, I am Cecil Neville," said Lord Cecil. "I am an old—" he paused—"an old friend of Miss Marlowe's, whom I did not expect to meet here. You are a relation, I presume?"

"No," said Percy Levant, meeting the half fierce gaze of the dark Stoyle eyes. "But I hope to be. I have the happiness and honor to be Miss Marlowe's affianced husband."

Cecil Neville drew back a step, and his face grew white.

"I—I beg your pardon," he said stiffly. "I—I did not know. Why did you not tell me?" he asked, turning to Doris with white lips and reproachful eyes.

She tried to speak, had opened her lips, indeed, when a voice, impatient and querulous, broke the silence. It was the voice of Lady Grace.

"Cecil! Cecil!" she called. "Where are you? Ce—cil! Ce—cil!"

His face reddened.

"I am going to Pescia to visit a sick relative," he said, addressing Percy Levant in a low voice. "You will be able to find me at the hotel, if you should require me," he added.

"Thank you, my lord," said Percy Levant significantly.

"Ce—cil!" called the voice again.

He bit his lip, and without another word, turned and left them; but as he passed out of the walk, illumined by the bright rays of the moon, he stopped and looked back, as Adam might have looked back upon Paradise he had left for ever, as one might have looked for the last time upon a treasure utterly and entirely lost.

Lord Cecil walked towards the carriage in which Lady Grace and the marquis's lady housekeeper were sitting, and Lady Grace, leaning through the window, greeted him with a smiling but scarcely concealed impatience.

She was dressed in a travelling costume of Redfern's, which must have astonished the intelligent foreigner pretty considerably, and looked, for all her famous loveliness, rather tired, worn, and ill at ease.

"Why, Cecil, where have you been?" she exclaimed; "I have been calling for the last half hour."

"Scarcely as long as that Grace," he said, and his voice sounded hoarse and strained. "I have only been a few yards away, and heard you."

"At least, then, you might have answered," she retorted. "Do you know how long we are to wait here?"

"Not much longer," he replied, leaning against the carriage, and averting his face from the gaze of her sharp, keen eyes. "Horses are not machines, you must remember, and want rest sometimes."

"Horses, I don't call them horses," she said contemptuously; "they are living skeletons. I am getting tired of sitting here!"

"Will you come inside the inn?" he asked, with a barely concealed weariness.

"Oh, no, thanks. I know what that means. These inns are a disgrace to any civilized country. What with the smell of garlic, and the dreadful men hanging about them, they are too awful. If you can get me a glass of decent wine, dear——"

"All right," he said, and went into the inn.

"Give me a bottle of the best wine you have got, and a glass of brandy," he said to the landlord, and he drank the latter almost at a draught, his hand shaking as he carried the glass to his lips.

If he had seen a ghost instead of sweet Doris Marlowe, he could not have been more completely unmanned and upset. Indeed he had seen a ghost; the ghost of his lost happiness and wrecked life, and she was to marry this stranger, this Percy Levant; what had become of the Mr. Garland, with whom she had sailed to Australia then?

He was so lost in troubled reverie that he had quite forgotten Lady Grace, until the familiar, too familiar, "Ce—cil," issuing from the carriage, recalled his wandering mind.

He caught up the wine bottle and a glass and strode back to the carriage, filled with that weariness and despair which renders every moment of existence almost unendurable to the galley slave and convict.

At that moment he would have given half a continent, had he possessed it, to be alone, and free to indulge in his own bitter reflections.

Unknown to the valet, the Pescia doctor had telegraphed to him a few days ago, and he had told Lady Grace that he must start for Italy, and at once.

Much to his surprise, to his embarrassment also, she had declared her intention of accompanying him. The fact must be stated, alas! that Lady Grace could not endure her lover's absence from her side even for a few days.

Her love for him—her passion as it must

be called—had become the absorbing sentiment of her life, and like all absorbing emotions, it tortured her.

She knew, knew for a certainty, that he did not love her, and all her days and nights were filled with a devouring jealousy and discontent.

She was rendered wretched if he spoke to or danced with a young and pretty girl. She was jealous of his past as a whole, but madly, fiercely jealous of the girl, Doris Marlowe, from whom she had, by the assistance of Spencer Churchill, succeeded in separating him.

She knew he did not love her; that she had entrapped him into the engagement, and she dreaded with an agony of apprehension lest anything should occur to separate them.

It is not too much to say that she hated the marquis for being ill and causing the postponement of her marriage. A woman when she knows that love is returned, is full of trust and confidence, but Lady Grace, knowing that Cecil bore her no love, was full of distrust and suspicion, doubt, and fear.

She was never happy, nor at ease, unless he was in her sight, and she found it simply impossible to allow him to go to Italy without her.

Sometimes, in the dead of night she would awake with a start and a cry of terror from a nightmare in which she had dreamed that he had discovered her share in the plot which had robbed him of Doris and bound him to herself, and by day she lived in a constant dread that some accident would reveal the conspiracy and deprive her of him.

So intense an anxiety began to tell upon her, and already there were lines and wrinkles on the face which artists had painted and of which poets had sung.

To put it briefly, Lady Grace's punishment had commenced even in the first hour of her triumph!

Black care sits behind every sorrow, but he is never more safely seated than when he rides behind the man or woman whose success depends upon a lie.

She knew that the world would talk and shrug its shoulders if she accompanied Lord Cecil to Italy, although she took the elderly lady as a chaperone; but she set the world's opinion at naught, just as she had done when, in obedience to Spencer Churchill's promoting, she went down to Lord Cecil's chambers. She could not let him out of her sight, and that was the long and short of it.

Lord Cecil took the wine to the carriage, and poured some out for her, but she only put her lips to it.

"It is too awful!" she said irritably. "Pray hurry them on, Cecil. I am sure those horses must be rested by now. It is sheer laziness! Who was that you were talking to when I called you?" she asked sharply, her keen eyes fixed on his face.

He felt himself growing white.

"Nobody you know," he said abruptly. "Try and drink some wine, it is not so bad."

"Are you sure I don't know them? I thought I heard English voices."

"You don't know them," he said almost curtly.

"Let me out and let me see," she said querulously. "I am sick of being cooped here."

"Come out by all means, if you like, Grace," he responded, "but there is no one there, and the horses are just being put to."

As he spoke the postillion led the weary animals into the shafts, and Lady Grace sank back with a restless sigh.

"We shall find the marquis dead," she said, callously. "We seem to have been years on the journey; yes, he will be dead!"

"I trust not," he responded grimly. "I'll ride outside and smoke a cigar."

She flung herself back amongst the cushions.

"Oh, very well," she said petulantly.

Lord Cecil got on the box, and the carriage rolled onwards to Pescia and the Fate awaiting them.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

HEAVEN ONLY KNOWS what complexion Cecil's thoughts took during the journey, but he was graver and grimmer than ever when he got down at the door of the villa to help his affianced bride to alight.

The marquis's valet received them with surprise tempered by satisfaction.

"I am glad you have come, my lord, though I did not like to take the responsibility of wiring for you. The marquis is much worse. Oh, yes; decidedly much worse. He is asleep just now, but it is quite as well that you came."

"I will see him at once," said Lord Cecil quickly.

"And I, too," said Lady Grace, slipping her arm within his.

The valet led the way upstairs.

The old man was lying apparently asleep, but as Lord Cecil bent over him he opened his eyes, and after a few seconds said, in a feeble voice and with the old cynical smile:

'Oh, it's you, Cecil, is it? And is that you, my dear?" turning his eyes in the direction of Lady Grace.

"Yes, it is I, dear marquis," she murmured.

He started.

"Oh, Grace, is it?" he mumbled. "I thought it was she."

"She? Who, dear marquis?" Grace demanded.

He smiled.

"No matter. And so they have sent for you, have they? They think I am in danger. You have come on a fool's errand, both of you. I—" grimly,—"I don't mean to die yet, Grace."

"Oh, I hope not! Pray don't talk of anything so dreadful," she responded with a false smile. "Why, you know," and she bent lower with a fine affectation of modesty "you are to dance at our—our—wedding, dear marquis."

"Ah, yes!" he said wearily, and with none of the enthusiasm she had expected. "Yes, yes, of course. You are going to be married, you and Cecil. Yes, I remember. I'll make haste and get better. In a day or two."

He closed his eyes wearily and turned his face awry.

"He may last for weeks, months, even years, my lady," said the doctor of whom Lady Grace made inquiries with a scarcely concealed impatience. "Marvellous constitution, you see, and with care——"

And he waved his hand deferentially.

The days passed in what her ladyship declared to be a tediousness almost insupportable.

She had the best rooms of the best hotel, but they were not grand enough for her fine London taste, and as for the scenery, Lady Grace would have exchanged the whole Alpine range for a quarter of a mile of Hyde Park.

She would have been happy enough if Cecil could have spent every minute of his time with her, but this Cecil could not possibly do.

In his present condition of mind, the society of his engaged wife nearly drove him mad, and he spent most of his time either beside the marquis's bed or at the villa.

"Surely you do not intend to play the part of sick nurse, my dear Cecil!"

Lady Grace remonstrated when, on the third morning after their arrival, he told her that he could not go out riding with her, because he had promised to sit with the marquis.

"Not exactly that, Grace," he replied quietly. "But I am naturally anxious about him and wish to be with him, more especially as, strange to say, he seems to desire my presence."

"He must have changed to an extraordinary extent!" she retorted with something like a sneer on her exquisitely carved lips.

Cecil nodded.

"Yes," he assented simply. "He has changed—for the better. I suppose we shall all feel the approach of the great Shadow! Poor old man!"

She stared at him, then laughed, a cold laugh of amusement, almost of mockery.

"Really, you are the most forgiving of men, Cecil!"

"I am afraid not," he said, stifling a sigh. "I'm sorry I can't go with you, Lady Grace."

"Oh, I daresay you will be happier with the marquis!" she retorted, as she turned to the glass to arrange her riding hat. "I only hope and trust that the marquis will soon get better, and allow us to leave this place. I was never in a duller hole in my life."

"They call Pescia pretty, too," he replied absently, as he followed her out and helped her to mount.

Then he lit a cigar, and was going across to the villa, his mind heavy with thought, when suddenly Percy Levant stepped in front of him, and raised his hat.

Cecil's face reddened for an instant; then, as he responded to the greeting, he said:

"I had expected to see you before this, Mr. Levant. Will you please walk upstairs?"

Percy Levant declined the offer.

"What I have to say will take but a few minutes," he said gravely. We neither of us desire a prolonged interview."

"I am at your service," returned Lord Cecil, with a slight bow.

Percy Levant eyed him with a strange expression, scarcely that of resentment as of dull, heavy sadness.

"I presume, my lord, you conceive that I am here to demand from, or offer, the satisfaction which an appeal to arms would afford both of us—both of us!" he added grimly.

"I can only say that I am prepared to accept any proposal you may have to make, Mr. Levant," said Lord Cecil. "But I am obliged, in honor, to say this—I don't want to take it as an apology; great Heavens, no!—but I'm bound to say that the words you heard me address to Miss Marlowe the other evening were uttered in complete ignorance that her word was plighted to you or any other gentleman."

Percy Levant bowed.

"Were you in ignorance that *your* word was plighted to another lady?" he said in a low voice.

Lord Cecil's face flamed, then grew pale, and he sprang from his lounging attitude against the mantel shelf to an upright position; but, with a palpable effort, he restrained himself.

"That is a rebuke which I have deserved and must submit to, Mr. Levant," he said grimly. "It is true that I am engaged to Lady Grace Peyton, and that I had no right to address Miss Marlowe as I did, but I think if you knew all the circumstances of the case you, even you, would feel more inclined to pity than to condemn me. But I don't appeal to your consideration. As I said"—with a touch of hauteur—"I am at your disposal, in any way, and at any time."

"You mean, of course, that you are ready to fight, my lord."

"You interpret my meaning," replied Lord Cecil calmly. "I have no doubt you feel aggrieved. I should if I stood in your place. I have no doubt Miss Marlowe"—his lips quivered—"has told you of our past—our past relationship——"

"Miss Marlowe has told me nothing, but I have drawn my own conclusions. I have been content to accept Miss Marlowe's silence, complete silence respecting the past."

"Ah, yes," said Cecil, with a repressed sigh. "What does it matter to you, who have the priceless boon of her present and future love?"

The words were wrung from him, and he would have recalled them if he could have done so, when he saw the effect they produced upon Percy Levant, whose face grew white, and whose eyes flashed.

But he, too, seemed to be striving for self-restraint.

"I am afraid you do not know all, my lord," he said. "But to come to the business which brought me here! Miss Marlowe and I are to be married on the sixteenth."

Lord Cecil bit his lip and nodded.

"So soon?" he said almost inaudibly.

"Well, sir, why do you tell me this?"

"Because I have to make a proposal to you, my lord. You expect a challenge from me?"

"I have expected it for the last three days, Mr. Levant."

"Will you, my lord, permit me to withhold the challenge until the sixteenth?"

Lord Cecil stared at him.

"Till the day of your marriage?" he exclaimed.

"Exactly," returned Percy Levant. "Such a request astonishes you, no doubt. It is only natural that you should demand my reasons for this delay, but I shall ask as a favor, that you permit me to keep them to myself until the sixteenth! I have another request to make, which, I fear, you will deem as strange as those which have preceded it."

"Go on!" said Cecil, knitting his brows.

"I shall be glad if your lordship will permit me to call at the Villa Vittoria, Lord Steyle's residence, at four o'clock on the sixteenth. I shall have an explanation to make which you may consider an ample excuse for accepting any challenge I may offer."

Cecil, after a moment's perplexed consideration, turned to him.

"I haven't the least idea of your motives in these requests, Mr. Levant," he said, with quiet dignity, "but I don't think I can do anything else than grant them. After all, I have no claim for satisfaction from you; the offence lies with me."

"Just so, my lord," said Percy Levant, taking his hat. "I wish you good morning. On the sixteenth you and I shall understand each other more easily."

"I hope so," said Cecil grimly. "One moment," he added hesitatingly, as Percy Levant turned to leave the room. "Is Miss Marlowe in Pescia—?" he asked quietly.

"Miss Marlowe is in Pescia, my lord," replied Percy Levant, looking at him steadily.

Cecil's face grew hot.

"Will you tell her that—that I knew nothing of her engagement—No! Tell her nothing!"

"I think that is far the better course, my lord," said Percy Levant, and with another bow he went.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

BOOK MAKING IN JAPAN.—Having resolved to "paint" a book, for, as all the world knows, the Japanese use a brush and not a pen, the author betakes him to his work-room. It is a little room, a very little room.

"Six mats" is its Japanese measurement, and a mat is about six feet by four. It is full of the soft, dull light which pulses from a square white paper lantern; the low, bright wooden ceiling gives back a pale brown gleam here and there.

There is a silvery glint in the frail panelled walls, and in a warm gray shadowed recess a gold buddha crosses his feet and stretches forth his palms, smiling gently upon the lotus which he holds.

In another recess stand the curious vessels of iron and clay and bamboo for the tea ceremony.

The author sits on the floor in a flowing garment of brown silk lined with blue, his legs disposed comfortably under him. In front of him stands a lacquered table, about a foot high, and upon it writing materials, which are as idyllic as his surroundings—his paper is delicately tinted yellow, with blue lines running up and down.

His inkstand is a carved ebony slab, with one end hollowed out for water to rub his cube of India ink in, and hold the four or five daintily decorated bamboo brushes which are his pens. Naturally he does not write his novel, he paints it.

Beginning at the end of the whole, at the left of every page and at the top of every line, straight down between the two blue parallels his small brown hand goes, with quick, delicate, dark touches.

Although this novelist's "copy" might seem to a stranger to be daintiness itself, yet he always has it duplicated "by an artist" before sending it to the publishers, the success of the book depending so largely upon its artistic forth-bringing.

The "artist" to whom the "copy" is now intrusted proceeds to repaint the long series of word pictures with a professional dexterity which is something astonishing.

THE UNCERTAIN DOG.—This may be an old story, but a dog story just told by a gentleman of unimpeachable, or at least unimpeached truthfulness, is certainly newer. Meeting this gentleman the other day, it was remarked that he had not his bulldog Buff with him lately, and asked what had become of his. "Well," said he, "it is the sad outcome of that singular McCarty business." "The McCarty business? What do you mean?" asked the listener. "Why," said he, "have you never heard of that? Well, I will tell you. Down on the corner below our house there lived the Widow McCarty, and she had a dog that looked so much like ours that we never could tell them apart. They were singularly alike even to the left handed twist in the tail. Well, we mixed the dogs up so often that they ended in miking each other up. Our dog would see Mrs. McCarty going down the street and would suppose that he was her dog, and would take after her. When she got home her dog, seeing the other one following her, would suppose that he must have made a mistake, and that he was our dog, and then he would come right over to our house. That would settle them for a day or so, and then some accident would switch them off again, and then they would be all at sea once more." "Well, how did it come out?" "That's what I'm going to tell you. At last somebody poisoned Mrs. McCarty's dog. And as by this time neither dog had any guide to go by but the conduct of the other, our poor dog was at a perfect loss to know whom he belonged to; and he vibrated so constantly from one opinion to the other, and from one house to the other, and lived in such a state of continual vexation, that it preyed on his reason. We were afraid that he was going mad, and we had to shoot him."

A BOY at Lille, France, has just met with the same fate as the heroine in the song of the "Mistletoe Bough." He disappeared, and search was made for him to no purpose, until it occurred to his uncle to look inside a large box. There he found his nephew's corpse.

WHAT kind of sweetmeats were most prevalent in Noah's ark?—Preserved pairs.

THE LOST DREAMS.

BY A. D. R.

Darken, and darker, the shades are sinking,
Brilliant day gives place to night—
Oh what is you pensive maiden thinking,
What sees she in the fire-light?

Castles of old in their moss-grown splendor,
Ivy interlaced, steep, and bare,
Crown'd by the moon beams white and tender,
Kiss'd by the perfumed midnight air.

Tapestried halls in shadow like glory;
Ceiling panell'd with age and dust,
Round which there lingers some antique story
Of knight and maidens, love and trust.

Dreamer, turn! for the scenes have vanish'd,
One small ember destroy'd them all;
Thus human hopes by a breath are banish'd,
"Castles of air are built to fall."

A Mysterious House.

BY A. BLACKWOOD.

EXPLANATIONS ARE usually very tedious, and so without any introduction or preambulation I will plunge right into the midst of this uncanny story I am about to tell.

When, some fifteen years before the time of which I write, I was a schoolboy at E— on I made close friends with a fellow above me in the school, named Pelham.

We were very great chums, and later on we went to Cambridge together, where my friend spent money and time in wasting both, while I read for holy orders, though I never actually entered the Church.

Since that time I had completely lost sight of him and he of me, and, with the exception of seeing his marriage in the papers, had no news at all of his whereabouts.

One morning, however, towards the close of September 1857, I received a letter from him, short, precise, and evidently written in a great hurry, asking me to go down and see him at his family seat just outside Norwich.

I packed my bag and went that very same evening. He met me himself at the station and drove me home.

We hardly recognized each other at first sight, so much had we changed in appearance, both being on the dark side of thirty-five, but our individual characters had remained much the same and we were still to all appearances the best of friends. My friend was not very talkatively disposed, and I kept up a fire of questions until we drew up at the park gates.

Going up the drive to the house he brightened up considerably, and gave me plenty of information about himself and family.

He was quite alone, I was surprised to hear, his wife and two daughters with an uncle of his having left for the Continent two days previous.

After dinner he seemed quite the old "Cambridge Undergrad" again, and once settled round the old-fashioned hearth, with cheroots and coffee, we talked on over the days spent at Eton and Cambridge.

We were just discussing our third edition of tobacco, when Pelham suddenly changed the subject, and said he would tell me now why he had written so shortly to me to pay him this unexpected visit. His face grew grave as he began by asking me if I was still a sceptic as regards ghostly manifestation.

"Indeed I am," was my answer; "I have no reason to change my views on the subject, and I think exactly as I used to at Cambridge, when we so strongly differed; but I remember you then saying that, if ever in after years you should come across an opportunity of proving to me your ideas on the subject, you would write to me at once, and I also recollect giving my word that, if possible, I would come.

But during the fifteen years that have passed by I have bestowed little, if any, thought on the subject."

"Exactly," answered Pelham, with a grave smile that did not please me; "but now I have at last heard of a case which will satisfy us both, I think, so I wrote to you to come down and fulfil your old promise by investigating it."

"Well! let me hear all about it first," I said cautiously.

I certainly was not overjoyed to hear this news, for, though a sceptic to all intents and purposes, still "ghosts" was a subject for which I had a certain fear, and the highest ambition of my life was not to investigate haunted houses and the like just because I had years ago promised I would should a chance occur.

But I repressed my feelings and tried to look interested, which I was, and delighted, which I certainly was not.

Pelham then gave me a long account—thrilling enough too it was—of the case, which I have somewhat condensed in the following form.

Some three or four years before, my friend had bought up a house which stood on the moorland about eight miles off. One morning before breakfast the tenant of the house, a Mr. Sherleigh (who was there with his family,) suddenly burst into my friend's study without any ceremony, and, in great heat and excitement, shouted out the following words:

"You shall suffer for it, Lord Pelham, my wife mad, and the little boy killed with fright, because you didn't choose to warn us of the room next the drawing-room, but you shall——"

Here the footman entered, and at a sign from his master led the excited and evidently crackedold man from the room, but not before he had crashed down some gold pieces on the table, with:

"That's the last rent you'll get for that house, as sure as I am the last tenant."

"Well," continued my friend, "that very day, now two years ago, I rode over there myself and the house was empty. The Sherleighs had left it, and since that day I have never been able to let it to anyone. Mr. Sherleigh, who was quite mad, poor fellow, threw himself before a train, and was cut to pieces, and Mrs. Sherleigh spread a report that it was haunted, and now no one will take it or even go near it, though it stands high and is in a very healthy position. Two nights ago, I was riding past the road which leads up to it, and through the trees I could see light in one of the upper rooms, and figures, or rather shadows, of a woman's figure, with something in her arms, kept crossing to and fro before the window blind. I determined to go in and see what on earth it was, and tying my horse just outside I went in. In a minute or two I was close underneath the window where the light was still visible, and the shadow still moving to and fro with a horrible regularity. As I stood there undecided, a feeling within warned me not to enter the house, so vivid, it was almost a soft voice that whispered in my ear. I heard no noise inside, the night air was moaning gently through the fir trees which surrounded the house on one side and nearly obscured the upper part of the window from view. I stooped down and picked up a large stone—it was a sharp-edged flint—and without any hesitation hurled it with all my might at the window pane, some eight or ten feet from the ground. The stone went straight and struck the window on one of the wooden partitions, smashing the whole framework, glass and all, into a thousand splinters, many of which struck me where I stood. The result was awful and unexpected. The moment the stone touched the glass the lights quite disappeared, and in the blackness in which I was surrounded, the next minute, I could see hiding behind the broken corners of glass a dark face and form for a short instant, and then it went and all was pitch dark again. There I was among those gloomy pine trees hardly knowing which way to turn. The face I had caught a momentary glimpse of was the face of Mr. Sherleigh, whom I knew to be dead! My knees trembled. I tried to grope my way out of the wood, and stumbled from tree to tree, often striking my head against the low branches. In vain. With the weird light in the window as a guide, I had taken but a few minutes to come, but now all was dark and I could not find my way back. I felt as if the dismal tree trunks were living things, which seemed to move. Suddenly I heard a noise on my left. I stopped and listened. Horror! I was still close to the window, and what I heard was a cracking and splintering of broken glass, as if some one from inside were slowly forcing their way out through the hole made by my stone! Was it he? The fir tree next me suddenly shook violently, as if agitated by a powerful gust of wind, and then in a gleam of weird light I saw a long dark body hanging half way out of the window, with black hair streaming down the shoulders. It raised one arm and slammed down something at my feet which fell with a rattle, and then hissed out: 'There's the last rent you'll ever have for this house.' I stood literally stupified with horror, then a cold numb sensation came over me and I fell fainting on my face, but not until I had heard my horse give a prolonged neigh and then his footsteps dying away in the distance on the hard moorland road.

"When I recovered consciousness it was broad daylight. I was cold and damp; all night I had lain where I had fell. I rose and limped, stiff and tired, to the place where I had tied my horse the night before, but no horse was there. And the horrible sound of his hoofs echoing away in the distance came back to me, and I shuddered as I thought of what I had seen. After a terrible trudge of three hours I reached home. A tremendous search had been made for me, of course, but no one dreamt of looking for me where I really was. The horse had found his way home, and I have never found out what frightened him so."

My friend's account was over.

He lit his cigar, which had gone out during the narrative, and settling himself comfortably in his chair, said:

"Well, old boy, that's a case I don't feel at all inclined to investigate by myself, but I'll do it with your aid. You know, a genuine sceptic is a great addition in such things, so we'll get to the bottom of it somehow."

My feelings at that moment were not difficult to describe. I disliked the whole affair, and wanted heartily to get out of it; and yet something urged me to go through with it and show my friend that the house was all right, that imagination did it all, that the horse may have taken fright at anything, and that very possibly there really was someone in the house all the time, and imagination had done all the rest.

Such were the somewhat mixed thoughts in my mind at the time. However, in a few moments all was settled and we had agreed to go the following night, search the house first, and then sit up all night in the room next the drawing-room.

Then we both went to our separate bedrooms to think the matter over and get a long sleep, as we neither expected to get any the following night.

Next morning at breakfast we both talked cheerfully about the coming night and how best to meet its requirements as regards food, etc.

We agreed to take pistols for weapons, horses as a means of conveyance, and abundant food wherewith to fortify ourselves against a possible attack of ghosts.

The day drew on towards its close. It was very hot and sultry weather, and not a breath of air stirred the murky atmosphere, as at 4 30 P. M. we bestrode our horses and made off in the direction of the "White House."

A long gravel road, lonely in the extreme, led us across the wild uncultivated moorland for six or seven miles, then we saw a copse of fir trees which, my friend informed me, were the trees which sheltered one side of the house.

In a few minutes we had passed through the front garden gate and were among the dark fir trees, and then as we turned a sharp corner the house burst full upon us. It was square and ugly.

Great staring windows in regular rows met our eyes and conveyed an unpleasant impression to the brain—at least, they did to mine.

From the very moment we had passed the front gate till I left the house next morning, I felt a nasty sick sensation creep over me, a feeling of numbness and torpor which seemed to make the blood run thick and sluggish in my veins.

The events of that night have ever remained engraven on my brain as with fire, and, though they happened years ago, I can see them now as vividly as then.

Only an eye-witness can possibly describe them, should be wish to do justice to them, and so my feeble pen shall make the attempt.

It was about 6 30, and we had settled our horses in a barn outside for the night. There were only two walls to keep the barn in position, and these were simply a row of rotten posts, half-decayed in places, so we securely tied the horses and with a good supply of hay, left them for the night.

We then approached the door and, after fumbling in the lock for some time, Pelham succeeded in opening it.

A sickly, musty odor pervaded the hall, and the first thing we did after a thorough search, which revealed nothing, was to open all the doors and windows all over the house, so as to let in what little air there was.

Then we went upstairs into the little room next the drawing-room, where, according to Sherleigh, strange things had occurred.

But the window was in pieces, and hardly an entire pane of glass was left, and we were forced to select another room on the same floor (i. e. the second) and looking out on the same copse of pine trees, whose branches almost touched the glass, so close were they.

It was a very ordinary room; a fire place, no furniture but a rickety table and three chairs, one of which was broken. The only disagreeable feature we noticed about the room was its gloominess; it was so very dark.

We soon had six candles fixed and burning in different parts of the little room, and the blaze of light was still further increased by a roaring fire, on which a kettle was singing for tea, and eggs boiling in a saucepan, and at half-past seven we were in the middle of our first tea in a haunted house.

It was, indeed, less luxurious than the dinners I had been used to lately, but otherwise there was nothing to find fault with, and a little later the tea things were cleared away in a heap in a corner (where, by the by, they are to this day), and we were sitting round an empty table, smoking in silence.

The door out into the passage was fast shut, but the windows were wide open. The sun had sunk out of sight in a beautiful sky of wonderful coloring.

Small fleecy clouds floating about caught the soft after glow and looked unearthly as seen through the thick fir branches. The faint red hue of the western sky looked like the reflection of some huge and distant conflagration, growing dimmer and fainter as the dark engines of the night played upon it, extinguishing the leaping flames and suffusing the sky with a red reflected glow.

Not a breath of air stirred the trees. My friend had left the window and was poking and arranging the fire, with his back turned towards me. I was standing close to the window, looking at the fast-fading colors, when it seemed to me that the window sash was moving. I looked closer. Yes! I was not mistaken. The lower half was gradually sinking; gradually and very quietly it went down.

At first I thought the weight had slipped and gone wrong, and the window was slipping down of its own accord; but when I saw the bolt pulled across and fastened as by an invisible hand, I thought differently.

My first impulse was to immediately undo the bolt again and open the window, but on trying to move—good heavens! I found I had lost all power of motion and could not move a muscle of my body. I was literally rooted to the ground. Neither could I move the muscles of my tongue or mouth; I could not speak or utter a word.

Pelham was still doing something to the fire, and I could hear him muttering to himself, though I could not distinguish any words. Suddenly, then, I felt the power of motion returning to me; my muscles were relaxing, and turning, though not without a considerable effort, I walked to the fire-place.

Pelham, then, for the first time noticed that the window was shut, and he made a remark about the closeness of the night, asking me why I had closed it.

"Hullos," he went on, before I had time to answer, "by the gods above! what is happening to that window? Look—why it's moving!"

I turned. The window was slowly being opened again.

Yes, sure enough it was. Slowly and steadily it moved or was pushed up.

We could but believe our eyes; in half a minute the window was wide open again. I turned and looked at Pelham and he looked at me, and in the dead silence we stared at one another, neither knowing what to say or wishing to break the silence. But at length my friend spoke.

"I wish I were a sceptic, old man, like you are; sceptics are always safer in a place like this."

"Yes," I said, as cheerfully as I could, "I feel safe enough, and what's more, I am convinced that the window was opened by human agency from the outside."

Pelham smiled, he knew as well as I that no human fingers could have fastened the bolt from outside.

"Well," he said briskly, "perhaps you are right; come, let us go examine the window."

We rose and approached it, and my friend put his head and shoulders out into the air.

It was very dark, and a strange oppressive stillness reigned outside, only broken by the gentle moaning sound of the night wind as it rustled through the trees and swept their branches like the strings of a lyre.

I followed my friend's example, and together we peered out into the night. Soon my eyes rested on the ground below us, and at the base of one of the nearer pines I thought I could distinguish a black form, clinging, as it seemed, to the tree.

I pointed it out to Pelham, who failed to see anything, or at least said so; anyhow, I was glad to believe that my excited imagination was the real cause.

We were still leaning out of the window in silence, when several of the trees, espe-

cially the one where I imagined I had seen the shape, were most violently agitated, as though by a mighty wind; but we felt not the slightest breath on our faces.

At the same instant we heard a subdued shuffling sound in the room behind us, which seemed to come from the direction of the chimney.

But neither of us referred to it as we slowly walked by to the fire and took up our places on either side on the two chairs, which were at the best very rickety.

"It isn't wise to leave the window open," said my friend, suddenly, "for if there really is anyone outside, they can see all and everything we do; while we, for our part, can see nothing of what goes on outside."

I agreed, and walked up to the window, shutting it with a bang and firmly drawing the bolt.

"I've brought a book," he went on, "which I thought we might read out aloud in turn to relieve the dulness and the silence."

He stopped speaking and looked at me, and at the same moment I raised my eyes to his face.

To my intense horror and surprise I noticed for the first time a long smear of blood, wet and crimson, across his forehead.

My horror was so great that for some seconds I could not find my tongue, and sat stupidly staring at him. At last I gasped out:

"My dear fellow, what has happened to you, have you cut yourself?"

"Where? what do you mean?" he replied looking round him with surprise.

For answer I took out my handkerchief, and wiping his brow, showed him the red stains.

But as I stood there showing him this proof and as he was expressing his utter astonishment, I distinctly saw something that for the moment made the blood rush from the extremities and crowd into my head.

Something seemed to tighten round my heart. I saw a large, gleaming knife and hand disappear in the air in the direction of the window. It was too much; my nerves failed me, and I dropped fainting to the floor.

* * * * * *

When I came to myself I was lying where I fell by the fire-place. Pelham was sitting beside me.

"I thought you were dead," he said, "you have been unconscious for over an hour."

He said this in such a queer manner and laughed so fiendishly that I wondered what had happened to him during the interval. Had he seen something awful and gone mad?

There was a strange light in his dark eyes and a leer on his lip.

Just then he took up his book quite naturally and began to read aloud, quite sensibly too, and soon I began to think, as I sipped my brandy out of our flask, that I must have had a frightful dream.

But there at my feet lay the blood-stained handkerchief, and I could not get over that. I glanced at his face; the smear had disappeared, and no scratch or wound was visible.

Pelham had not been reading long, perhaps some five or ten minutes, when we heard a strange noise among the trees, just audible above the death-like stillness of the autumn night.

It was a confused voice like the low whispering of several persons, and as I listened, still weak from the last shock, the blood stood still in my veins. Pelham went on reading as usual.

This struck me as very curious, for he must have heard the noise plainly; but I said nothing, and glancing at him I saw the same light in his eyes and the evil leer on his mouth, looking ugly in the flickering glare of the candles and firelight.

Suddenly we heard a tremendous noise outside, altogether drowning the first. The horses had broken loose and were tearing wildly past the house. Long and wild neighs rang out and died away, and we knew our horses were gone.

Pelham was still reading, and as I looked at him a sudden and most horrid thought flashed through my brain. It was this:

Had he anything to do with this? Was it possible?

Before I had time to answer my question Pelham threw down his book and made for the door, locked it, drew the key out, and opening the window threw it far away among the trees.

I then recognized the awful fact that I was alone with a madman. I glanced at my watch, it was a quarter to one. Instead of one hour I must have been unconscious two at least. This was terrible in the extreme.

He was a man of far more powerful physique than I. What was to be done? Pelham strode grinning up to the fire, went down on both knees and commenced blowing between the bars with all his might.

I saw my chance, and quietly walking to the window, without a word I climbed out, and letting myself as far down as my arms would allow I then let go and dropped. It was a distance of four or five feet, but in the darkness I tumbled forward on my face.

As I rose, uninjured, I distinctly heard the sound of running feet close to me, but in my bewilderment I could not make out clearly in which direction they were going; they only lasted a moment or two.

But what a terrific sight met my gaze as I turned the corner of the house, and saw volumes of smoke pouring steadily out of the windows and roof of the back portion of the house. Now and again a long flame, too, shot up to heaven.

'Good God!" I exclaimed, "the house is on fire."

No wonder the horses had taken flight, But my poor friend, what could I do for him? The window was too high for me to climb in again, and the doors were locked.

In a few minutes the flames would spread to this side of the house and the poor fellow would be burnt to death unless he had sense enough left to jump out of the window.

I hurried back to the spot where I had let myself down from the window, just in time to see the last scene of the most ghastly experience I have ever witnessed. Pelham was standing at the window. In his hand was a red-hot poker, and it was pointed at his throat, but the strain was too great for my nervous system and with a violent start "I woke up!"

* * * * * *

After our heavy tea we had both fallen asleep, just as we were in our chairs. Pelham was still snoring opposite me, and the light was stealing in through the window. It was morning, about half-past six.

All the candles had burnt themselves out, and it was a wonder they had not set fire to the dry wood near them.

Twenty minutes later we had re-lit the fire and were discussing the remnant of eggs and coffee.

Half an hour later we were riding home in the bright, crisp, morning air, and an hour and a half later we were in the middle of a second and far superior breakfast, during which I did not tell my dream, but during which we did agree that it had been the dullest and most uncomfortable night we had ever spent away from home.

JAPANESE GIRLS.

DURING THE LAST fifteen years such enormous and at the same time such rapid advance has been made in the state of civilisation in Japan, and still continues to be made, that even as we write many of the habits and customs mentioned in this paper are dying out, to be replaced by European fashions and uses.

In the year 1873 some very important reforms were introduced by the Mikado, several of which greatly affected the daughters of "the land of the rising sun," as the Japanese poetically name their beautiful islands.

One reform was an imperial decree giving permission to Japanese wives and daughters to travel to foreign countries.

Another decree was issued altering toilets and coiffures, recommending all who could afford it to adopt European costumes, and ordering the ladies to dress their hair themselves, and dispense with the services of female hairdressers.

This last edict must have caused some heart burnings among the gentle daughters of Japan, for their fashion of dressing their hair, which is generally very long, dark, and luxuriant, is very elobrate.

It is rais d very high in front and spread out in bows, not unlike the way which we dressed our hair in the days of powder and patches; long stiff loops droop on the nape of the neck; they then run long pins or arrows of gold, silver, or tortoiseshell through it, using a great deal of pomade to stiffen and keep the puffs of hair well spread out.

On festivals they wear flowers and ribbons in addition to these ornamental pins.

In this same year the European calendar was introduced instead of the Japanese one, though the date of the year is still reckoned from the accession of the first Mikado, so that a Japanese girl, writing a letter on the 1st of May, A. D. 1885, would date it the 1st of May, 2345.

Another peculiarity of her letter would be, that instead of writing in horizontal lines from left to right as we do, she would write in perpendicular lines, of irregular characters, many of which represent entire words.

All her books are printed on this same system.

Her watch would, like ours, be divided into twelve portions, but each portion would represent two hours instead of one, and the hours are not numbered, but each is represented by the sign of some animal; the rat, ox, tiger, hare, dragon, snake, horse, ram, ape, cock, hog, and the fox are the twelve Japanese hours.

The names of Japanese girls are very fanciful and sometimes really poetical; for instance, Wave of the Sea, Caryaanthemum, Twilight, Snow, Waterfall, Little Butterfly, though inconveniently long, are not unmeaning.

As soon as a Japanese baby girl or boy is born its head is shaved, and the hair is not allowed to grow at all until it is three years old, and then only in three patches. If the parents are rich a little daughter is by no means a welcome addition to the family, and very often they will adopt an heir to inherit their property; for adoption is very common in Japan, and heiresses in consequence very rare; but the position of women—always much better than that of their Chinese sisters—is daily improving, so that this unjust custom will probably soon die a natural death.

Women are now allowed to appear unveiled in the streets, though if married they may not speak to men except in the presence of their husbands.

But among the higher classes, especially at Court, the Japanese women and girls have always been treated with proper respect and courtesy; and out of a hundred and twenty-four sovereigns, eight have been empresses.

Although many Japanese girls of the higher classes now adopt the European style of dress, the national costume is still very common. The dress itself consists of a long, loose kind of dressing-gown, confined at the waist by a wide sash, called an "obi," with broad ends, which hang down behind; the sleeves are very wide, and sewed up inside to make pockets.

These garments may be made of cotton, silk, or more costly material, such as rich brocade, according to the rank of the wearer.

They are sometimes wadded, and the girls wear five or six at a time, one on top of the other; sometimes they will wear as many as twenty, from vanity, when they look like a moving bale of silk and brocaded goods. In paying a visit, if they feel very warm they take off one or two of their dresses.

Stockings are only worn while travelling and are made with a place for the great toe. Their shoes are more like clogs, and are little more than soles of straw, wood, or leather with two straps; one across the instep, and the other attached to it, goes between the great toe, and is fastened to the sole.

Outer high wooden clogs are worn for walking, particularly among the lower classes, but are removed directly the wearer enters the house, a point of etiquette on which the Japanese are very strict, and our fashion of entering hotels, buildings, and houses in our outdoor boots annoys them exceedingly.

Their pocket handkerchiefs are of paper; they carry a little packet of them in their sleeve pockets, and throw them away after using them.

Their umbrellas are not at all like the paper ones sold as Japanese parasols. They are made of oiled paper, very large and very heavy, and generally have the owner's name printed on the inside in Chinese characters. A good one costs about a franc or thirty sen; they are used indiscriminately as sunshades or umbrellas.

Japanese girls are often pretty, but they disfigure themselves terribly by painting their faces, an art in which they utterly fail, for they use coarse paints, and put the colors on very inartistically; they cover their faces with a dead white, rouge their cheeks, and color their lips a brilliant red or violet.

When they marry they shave off their eyebrows, and blacken their teeth, but as the Empress has wisely discarded this hideous custom it will probably soon die out.

It originated in the jealousy of the husbands in the upper classes; where the custom still prevails, the girls blacken their teeth before the marriage ceremony, and shave off their eyebrows immediately after.

Scientific and Useful.

DRY WALLS.—To test the dryness of walls, lay a very thin slip of gelatine against the object. If this is not thoroughly air dry, the gelatine becomes curved, with its convexity towards the object.

SAFETY ENVELOPES.—Some safety envelopes are tinted in such a manner as to turn black, blue, and red, if an attempt is made to open them by wetting or by exposure to steam, while moist air or fog does not affect them.

FOR THE HOUSEHOLD.—To polish German silver by hand, use a mixture of one part olive-oil, one of aqua ammonia, two of rotten-stone, and one of water as a thick paste. Picture-frame-maker's putty is made of whiting, glue, and water, worked very stiff. The mould is oiled. If you wish it to dry slowly, put a few drops of glycerine in the back of putty.

ROASTED COFFEE.—What a glorious disinfectant roasted coffee (or still better roasting) would be considered if it only smelt badly, instead of filling the room, the house, and best of all, your nose, with the cleanest and most delicious of all the aromas of the earth! During the war it was used as a disinfectant in many of the hospitals, and with great success.

CASTOR OIL.—The best way of taking castor oil is to thoroughly mix the dose with about four times as much hot milk—this is most effectually accomplished by shaking the two together in a bottle which they do not more than half fill. When taken as above directed, the activity of the oil appears to be increased, and, being rendered very limpid by the hot milk, its oily nature is not perceived. Children take it very readily in this form, in which, indeed, it is scarcely distinguishable from rich milk.

A DINNER CLOCK.—A new dinner clock which talks has been invented. Instead of striking the hour it speaks it. At dinner time a voice issues from the clock which says 'Dinner time;" also "One o'clock," "Two o clock," &c., as the case may be. Another device which the inventor is perfecting in connection with the clock is that of a female face which he purposes to set in the face of the clock. The lips of this figure will move at the hour, the head will bow, and the fictitious lady will say, 'Good evening, ladies and gentlemen, it is bed-time."

Farm and Garden.

POMACE.—It is the testimony of those who have given it a thorough trial that pomace is of enough value as a feed for cows, horses or hogs to pay a good profit for the labor in taking care of it.

GRINDING GRAIN.—It is often profitable to grind grain for the pigs where a farmer has a mill of his own and can do it at odd times. But to haul it to mill and back and pay toll takes most of the profit out.

THE STABLES.—The stables should not only be well cleaned and purified by plenty of fresh litter and plaster, which neutralizes the odor of a stable, but also by ample ventilation with abundant space for each cow.

GREENHOUSES.—In glazing greenhouses do not lap the glass over one-eighth of an inch. Many burns and scalds on palm leaves, etc., come from drops of water forming "lenses" in wide laps, and are often laid to some other cause.

COLLIES.—Collie dogs will not drive sheep or cattle until trained to do so. When such dogs are to be used they should be placed in the hands of a trainer and made to work with dogs that have been taught to not only drive the stock but to obey promptly.

FODDER AND HAY.—Clean fodder and clean hay, with the grain free from musty odor, will promote the appetite of the cow, and thereby increase the yield of milk. Ergotized grain, wet and muddy fodder and moldy hay are sometimes the cause of a refusal of food by stock.

FATTENING GEESE.—When fattening geese give a mixture of corn and wheat. They should also have a cooked mess twice a day, consisting of potatoes, turnips, chopped clover, cabbage and onions, as green food is essential. Add a small quantity of salt, and do not overlook the water.

TO CLEAN FEATHERS. — To clean feathers, saturate a piece of cotton-wool with benzene, and with it wipe the feather down the right way; then, when well damped, cover it with plaster of Paris. Let it remain for three hours, then shake off the plaster and curl the feather with a blunt knife.

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A PREMIUM TO SUBSCRIBERS.

THE POST will send as a premium to every person who sends us $2 00 for one year's subscription in advance, either the magnificent picture of "CHRIST BEFORE PILATE," which we have described in former issues, or the two splendid companion photo gravures "IN LOVE" and "THE PEACEMAKER." They are printed on heavy-toned paper, and are in size 12 x 16 inches each. The subject of the first named "In Love" represents a young couple dressed in the fashion of our grandfathers and grandmothers, sitting under a tree in the garden of an old-time mansion. The maiden is sewing and the lover after the style of the period, is paying her most courteous attention. Everything in the work is full of life and beauty. In the second picture, "The Peacemaker," the couple have plainly had a quarrel. Both pretend to want to part, and at the same time both are evidently glad of the kind offices of a young lady friend who has just come upon the scene, and wishes to have them "make it up." Each picture tells its own story completely, and each is the sequel and complement of the other. Prettier works of art or neater pictures for the ornamentation of a parlor or sitting-room, never came from the hands of an artist.

Remember we send either "Christ Before Pilate," or the *Two* Splendid Companion Photo-gravures "In Love" and "The Peacemaker," all postage paid to each subscriber who sends us $2 00 for THE POST one year.

The Young Men of To-day.

Every generation changes. It has been said of an innovator, that for the first ten years he is considered a fool, the second a promising man, and the third a hero. So men's opinions change and vary.

You may call it a science when you can with certainty know what is coming from what has past. When we know that at a certain time next year, or in fifty years, or in a hundred years, there will be an eclipse, and are absolutely beginning to calculate the return of storms and to foretell the weather with some certainty, then astronomy and meteorology may be called sciences; but history puzzles us, and the changes that come over peoples.

A famous writer says, "The temper of each generation is a continual surprise. The Fates delight to contradict our most confident expectations." What next, and next? "The most reasonable anticipations fail us; antecedents the most apposite mislead us, because the conditions of human problems never repeat themselves. What opinions, what convictions the infant of to-day will find prevailing on the earth if he and it live out together to the middle of another century, only a very bold man would undertake to conjecture."

Certainly we are not bold enough to conjecture. We cannot say whether we shall find faith or not. We seem now turning towards unfaith; yet there are signs that the present great stirrings up of creeds will, like most of its preceding movements, only result in a stronger faith. The times succeeding infidel times have always been fullest of it. Whether they will be so now again it is impossible to say.

Should days come,—uncomfortable and discomforting days, when there will be no law, no conscience, no God, and only expediency and self-interest shall sit crowned, ruling over mortals as selfish as they may be scientific,—we at least shall not be alive to see them. But should they happen, or should the often foretold and much misunderstood millennium arrive, of one thing we are certain, that the present race of boys and young men differ very much from the boys and young men of thirty or forty or fifty years gone.

And consistently with the world's change in that time, we find our young men more rough and manly than then, with less soft, generous, and universal feeling; for we hold it that unless a man has much of the mother in him, he is but imperfect. The grand, generous, and charitable may be sustained by the man's part, but they have their birth in the women's portion of us. As, therefore, our young fellows have become neater, but less finniking, manlier and rougher in their dress, bolder in their bearing, more upright, through drilling and other matters, they have become much less observant towards women and weak persons.

They are more tolerant, because they have less earnest faith, but they are much less charitable.

They unite greater shrewdness with more vain lavishness of money; but yet they love money more, and venerate its effects more. Money has in fact relatively more power than it had. It buys better art and more comfort, and our young fellows know it very well.

With regard to relations—especially female relations—our young men seem to have become rougher and ruder; and, if we are to believe report, woman, with her costly and somewhat unmanageable dress, her trinkets, her prettinesses, and her "little ways," is degenerating into a "bore." Young men now prefer men's society, that is, the society of young men to that of ladies, and pipes and billiards to conversation which "bores."

On the other hand, they are quick enough to perceive that woman is to them not wholly what she was to their fathers and grandfathers; that the world is getting harder to live in, and that woman daily enters into competition with men, and that some women despise man, and vainly talk about equalling, if not surpassing him.

The young man of to day has a shrewd suspicion that much of this is nonsense, and that the rest of it does not improve the women in their capacity of wives. Nor does he absolutely object that a woman should work for him any more than an Indian chief objects to be served by his squaw.

It will go hard with the young ladies in the future if by any means our young men should add the indifference of a Choctaw Indian to the supreme selfishness taught by modern civilization.

Deference for age, continuance in service, patience and endurance, seem too to be dying out. We are becoming more hasty, impetuous, shifting and headlong. We do not now refer to abstract principles. "The age of chivalry," said Burke, "is gone."

Altogether perhaps a wondrous but a hard and puzzling future is before our young men; but as they are reticent, reliant and selfish, they appear to be fitted to solve the problem, and to give way to a better and a nobler generation.

TRUE benevolence is not merely guided, but enlarged and invigorated, by true wisdom. It derives from practice that activity and that consistency, the want of which we are often compelled to deplore in the conduct and even tempers of philosophers, who have employed the greatest talents in the investigation of moral theories. It teaches men to sympathise with the sorrows and joys of their fellow creatures, and impels them to alleviate the one, and to perpetuate or heighten the other.

IF we had not within ourselves the principle of bliss, we could not become blest. The grain of heaven lies in the breast, as the germ of the blossom lies in the shut seed.

LET your houses be swept every day, and your windows opened to admit the fresh air, and your rooms washed every week. Let your beds and blankets be spread out in the open air, occasionally, in fine dry weather. Let your beds be turned down and exposed to the fresh air for an hour or two every morning before they are made. Sleep will be more beneficial as this rule is practiced.

ALL the lessons we rightly learn in the school of Divine wisdom are through suffering and self denial. Temptation and provocation may be considered as calls upon us to rehearse them; when it is with us as with children in spelling, those who err give place to those who are more correct; and this is the rule of precedence whereby all improper competition for high places is avoided.

CHARMS which like flowers lie on the surface and always glitter, easily produce vanity; hence women, wits, players, soldiers are vain, owing to their presence, figure and dress. On the contrary, other excellencies, which lie down like gold and are discovered with difficulty—strength, profoundness of intellect, morality—leave their possessors modest and proud.

"NEVER a rose without a thorn" is an axiom possessing much truth. It follows then that the thorns were created for the purpose of protecting the treasures of the bush. So do we often find in human life that beauties of the heart and mind are preserved by the thorns of unshapely bodies, unbeautiful faces, or lack of wealth.

IT is an old saying, that charity begins at home; but this is no reason it should not go abroad. A man should live with the world as a citizen of the world. He may have a preference for the particular quarter or square or even alley in which he lives, but he should have a generous feeling for the welfare of the whole.

THERE are few that are not aware at one time of their life or another that they know a better way of living, of doing. Goodness consists in living thus better, in doing thus better. What is needed then is a school for learning not so much what is to be done, as to do what we know ought to be done.

JOY is one of the greatest panaceas of life. No joy is more healthful or better calculated to prolong life than that which is to be found in domestic happiness, in the company of good and cheerful men, and in contemplating with delight the beauties of Nature.

THE more we live out of the world, the more little courtesies, such as are in the crowd unheeded, are magnified into favors; true, that the same process of exaggeration occurs in respect to petty affronts or inconsiderate slights. The heart never attains the independence of the mind.

IN forming a judgment, lay your hearts void of foretaken opinions; else, whatever is done or said will be measured by a wrong rule, like them who have the jaundice, to whom everything appeareth yellow.

THERE is in all of us an impediment to perfect happiness; namely, weariness of the things which we possess, and a desire for the things which we have not.

"WHEN I am making up a plan of consequence," says Bolingbroke, "I always like to consult a sensible woman." Bolingbroke was a great man!

PLATO, being told that some enemies had spoken ill of him, said: "It matters not; I will endeavor so to live that no one shall believe them."

HARD speech between those who have loved is hideous in the memory, like the sight of greatness and beauty sunk into vice and rags.

TRUTH has nothing to fear from error; constant friction does but improve its polish, even as it removes the rust from steel.

EVERY man feels instinctively that all the beautiful sentiments in the world weigh less than a single lovely action.

The World's Happenings.

It is considered an insult in Brazil to return borrowed money.

A sign on Tremont street, Boston, reads: "Fresh Eggs, 28 cents;" "Strictly Fresh Eggs, 30 cents."

A daring thief entered a yard in New Brunswick, N. J., the other night, and stole a hive of bees.

There are now 200 women studying medicine in the various universities and medical colleges of India.

The Speaker of the English House of Commons furnishes customers with milk, cream, eggs and poultry.

"Motorneer" is the name that the electricians favor for the man who is driver or engineer of the electric cars.

The Brooklyn Bridge is, perhaps, the only suspension bridge in the world over which horses are allowed to trot.

In Maine, spruce gum now brings to the men who gather it from $150 to $180 a barrel, according to quality. A barrel weighs about 170 pounds.

"Postable" is a word lately devised in England to denote any airy trifle weighing less than four pounds, and thereby capable of being sent by post.

The Shah of Persia is having a geographical globe made upon which the different countries of the world will be represented by precious stones.

Among the gifts of the Sultan to the Emperor William and wife were a sword valued at $75,000, and a collar of pearls and diamonds, worth $125 000.

Advertisement in a recent issue of the New London (Conn.) Telegraph: "Wanted—Dog to eat raw meat. Will buy or hire. W. A. H., H. station."

The Supreme Court of California has just decided that colored children cannot be excluded, because of their color, from the public schools of that State.

A shower of fish is recorded in a California exchange as having fallen near Bianco, in Monterey county, recently. "The fish belong to a species altogether unknown there."

Achille Fould, whose Salon pictures have been sold in this country, is a young Parisian woman, who signs a man's name to her pictures in order, she says, to get a better price for them.

A man near Griffin, Ga., has just finished a coffin for himself. He has no notion of dying in the near future, but built the coffin to make sure that his favorite wood (pine) should enter into its construction.

A "lion" that had created a sensation among farmers around Nevada City, Nev., by breaking into their houses, was traced by hunters to an old unoccupied cabin, and found to be a large Newfoundland dog.

George Matthews, of Youngstown, Ohio, is certainly a remarkable man. After having his right arm amputated as the result of an accident, he placed the severed arm in a valise, and, unattended, went 10 miles to his home.

The smallest salaried men in Government employ are Post Office Inspectors Comstock, of New York; McAfee, of St. Louis, and Bennett, of San Francisco. They are on the pay-roll at the Post Office Department for $1 a year.

At East Cliff, Cal., during the flood a little child gathered a small pile of wood and, for fear some one might take it, went home and got a piece of paper and wrote on it: "This wood was got by me for grandma; please don't steal it."

Chief Justice Corliss, of North Dakota, who enjoys the unique distinction of being the youngest chief justice on record, is a broad-shouldered man of angular build and tawny complexion, with a wisp of dense black hair and a salary of $4 000 a year. He is 31 years old.

Snowflakes the size of the human hand fell over a small area in Carson City, Nev., during the recent very cold spell. They didn't, however, come from the heavens, but from a factory's steam pipe, whence they emerged in the shape of steam, being converted into snow by contact with the cold air.

A more disgusted burglar would be hard to find than one now under arrest in Cincinnati. He remained snugly curled up under a bed for hours, waiting for the folks to retire, and his wish was about being gratified when he felt a desire to sneeze. He muffled his mouth, but the sneezing was heard, and he was pulled out and handed over to the police.

There is probably no paper in the country that can boast of such old and continuous subscribers as THE POST. Our oldest friends, however, are gradually dropping away. We now regret to hear that Mr. Jacob H. Saikeld, who has been a subscriber from the beginning of the publication of THE POST, died in Boston January 23d, 1890, in the 83d year of his age.

A farmer near Western, Neb., received a surprise the other day. After his favorite cow had died, as he supposed, he hitched up his team and carried the carcass to the bone-yard. The surprise and tableau took place when, on returning to the scene with a butcher knife to remove her hide, he was met by the faithful animal slowly making her way back home.

Mutilated bank notes to the value of half a million dollars are frequently destroyed in one day at the Treasury Department in Washington. They are thrown into a large hopper and ground to a pulp, which is afterward sold by contract to a paper manufacturer, so that the dainty sheet of paper on which a lady writes her invitations may represent what was formerly a hundred thousand dollars.

The meanest man in New Hampshire has been discovered near Dover. When his mother-in-law died at his home he notified the town authorities to pay the burial expenses, although he is a well-to-do farmer. She was the widow of a war veteran, however, and the Grand Army of the Republic paid the costs. Then the son-in-law sent in a bill charging for the hospitalities his wife had extended to the bearers and others who attended the funeral.

NO BLISS WITHOUT ALLOY.

BY G. A. F.

Oh, breathes that wretch on earth below,
So pale and woe-begone,
That poor neglected child of woe,
Forsaken and alone,
Whose ceaseless pangs know no relief,
Oppress'd by cruel fate,
Whose sorrows deep, and swelling grief,
No joys alleviate?

And oh! as rare, or rarer still,
That course of perfect joy,
That tastes the good unmix'd with ill,
The bliss without alloy;
Alas! alas! the search is vain,
For yet shall Wisdom find,
That in the cup of life, we drain
The good and ill combined.

In Search of a Wife.

BY MRS. LOVETT CAMERON.

COLONEL FRANCIS BIRCH had made up his mind that the time had arrived when it was desirable that he should take unto himself a wife.

He was turned fifty years of age, had left the service, had travelled round the world and had amused himself in every capital of Europe. There was clearly nothing left for him to do, but to marry.

His decision to do so was furthermore strengthened and confirmed, by the fact that upon the sudden death of a distant cousin, he had come unexpectedly into possession of the nice little property of Manor Oaks, in the county of Meadowshire.

Manor Oaks, a modern house built upon the site of an old one, was a square substantial mansion, standing in a well-wooded though not very extensive park. It was comfortably furnished within, and possessed excellent stables and pretty and well-stocked gardens. If it had not been situated in the dullest parish in all England, it would have been a delightful place; but unluckily there was what is called "no neighborhood" in the vicinity of Manor Oaks, and the village society of Oakshot was but little calculated to suit the taste of a man of the world such as Colonel Birch.

Nevertheless, such society as there was, was thrown into a fever of excitement by the advent of the still handsome, and distinguished-looking colonel, and many were the flutterings of feminine hearts when it was known that the interesting stranger had actually arrived, bag and baggage, horses and servants, at Manor Oaks.

By a singular fatality, the little community of Oakshot consisted almost entirely of ladies. Such men as there were—the vicar, the curate and the doctor—were married, or else, like Mr. Ransome at the Hall, they were, as Miss Grace Perain put it, "too old to count." There was not a marriageable man to be found within ten miles of Gunshot Church,

It may be imagined, therefore, what tremors of exciting hopes were aroused within each gentle bosom at the arrival within this veritable dovecot of our bachelor colonel, whose delightful reputation of being on the look out for a wife had already preceded him into the county where he was as yet a stranger.

If only he could have married them all, with what joy would not the ladies of Oakshot have constituted the meselves into an absolute harem for his benefit! But the stern laws of this benighted Christian country being against so comfortable a settlement of conflicting claims, it only remained to each aspirant to look well to the points of her armor ere entering the lists, where all were to strive, and only one to bear of the prize.

It was exceedingly appreciated, by the ladies of his flock, that the vicar should have immediately come to the front on their behalf by inviting them all to meet the new proprietor of Manor Oaks at the Vicarage very soon after his arrival.

The vicar's eldest daughter being only ten years old, he could have no interested motives—no motives at any rate of matrimonial interest, in thus putting himself forward early in the day, and the ladies of his congregation were duly sensible of, and grateful for his proptitude.

"Let him see us *all*," said Miss Letitia Perkins to her sister Grace, as she pinned her real India shawl about her best black satin evening gown, and settled her mother's pearl and diamond brooch securely in the velvet ribbon round her throat. "Let him see us *all* first—all together, so that there may be no prejudice or favor in the matter, and it will go hard on us if he is not able to suit himself with a wife without going further afield than his own parish."

Miss Grace thought so too. But she did not imagine that the colonel's choice would fall upon her sister.

"Five year's difference in age must tell," thought Miss Grace, who also had donned the black satin gown of state for this important occasion. And then, accompanied by the housemaid bearing a lantern, the sisters set forth from their cottage to walk to the Vicarage.

For, it being now December, the vicar's entertainment had taken the form of what his wife called "a little evening gathering." The guests were invited from nine to eleven. There were tea and coffee, cakes and lemonade in the dining-room, and music and conversation—Mrs. Holton called it "conversazione"—in the drawing-room.

The music was of the feeblest nature, being mainly composed of a duet warbled slightly out of tune by the two elder Miss Traceys, followed by variations from the "Traviata," as performed on the piano—thus pingly and with manifold wrong notes—by the doctor's wife. The conversation was entirely upon the theme—Colonel Francis Birch.

The room was full of guests, principally ladies; but the great man had not yet appeared.

They sat together in corners talking eagerly to each other, and casting furtive glances alternately towards the door and their own reflections in the mirrors around the room.

Mrs. Tracey with her three marriageable daughters was, perhaps more cruelly anxious, poor woman, than anybody else present. When Marion and Sophy had finished their duet she called them to her to see that they were not in any way the worse for their efforts.

"Such a pity," she whispered to her neighbor, "that Mrs. Holton asked them to sing so early! Their voices harmonize so sweetly, I am sure it would have been a pleasure to the colonel to have heard them."

"Perhaps Colonel Birch is not musical, mother," remarked Louisa, the youngest daughter, who sat on her mother's right hand.

"All well-educated persons are musical nowadays," replied Mrs. Tracey crushingly. Louisa had no accomplishments. She was only a pretty little kitten-like thing, pink and white and doll-like; and then she was young, really young—the youngest, in fact, of all the ladies gathered together in the Rev. Mr. Holton's drawing-room, for she was only sixteen, and it was her very first party!

"There goes the bell again!" cried Mrs. Tracey in an excited whisper to old Mrs. Farely, who, being between sixty and seventy years of age, was clearly out of the running with regard to the race for the colonel. "It must be him! No," sinking back into her chair with a disappointed air; "it is only the Perkin girls," for thus it was that, by a polite fiction, these two elderly virgins, aged forty and forty-five respectfully, had come to be designated in their native village.

"What dowdies they do look, to be sure! I remember those black satins of theirs at their brother's silver wedding, fifteen years ago; if you see them in daylight they shine at the seams"—this meant of course the gowns, not the ladies themselves.

"Another bell," said Mrs. Farely, who though an uninterested spectator was nevertheless not devoid of curiosity concerning the hero of the evening;" perhaps that's him. No, it's the Ransomes. How lovely Mrs Ransome looks," she added almost involuntarily.

A tall graceful young woman dressed in a pale grey silk had just entered the room and was shaking hands with Mr. and Mrs. Holton. She had soft dark brown hair very neatly arranged around her small thoroughbred head, a pale oval face and great sad-looking grey eyes fringed with long dark lashes.

There was something sweet and womanly and yet curiously proud about about young Mrs. Ransone, the widowed daughter-in-law who lived at the Hall with her widowed father-in-law. The ladies of Oakshot were a little bit afraid of her, for though she was kind to them all she was intimate with none of them—she kept them all at a distance with her little queenly air and her proud pale beauty. Her story was a sad one— how sad none of them rightly knew. She was only twenty-eight, and for seven years had been a widow. But no one quite understood the short and wretched history of her one year of wifehood. Margaret Ransome was not one of these women that make confidences to other women. The rack could scarcely have drawn from her any admission concerning her past. And as to the old gentleman, one had but to look at his stern gray face to be certain that nothing would ever be extracted from him about his dear son. So although poor George Ransome was commonly believed to have been wild fast and wicked, no one quite knew in what his sins consisted, nor to what extent his beautiful wife had been made to suffer, by reason of his iniquities.

"I never can admire those pale-looking people," said Mrs. Tracey disparagingly, in answer to Mrs. Farely's remark. "I can't see any beauty for my part in a white sickly face; I like a young woman's cheeks to be rosy and healthy.

"Like your own girls, my dear!—yes, they certainly have a very pretty fresh color; but there are plenty of people that like pale faces too; and I never heard anybody deny young Mrs. Ransome's beauty."

"Oh! no; I grant you she is a distinguished-looking. But, poor thing, one does not compare her with the girls—a widow is so different."

"Very different—sometimes," assented the old maiden lady drily.

At that moment Mrs. Ransome came up to shake hands with them both, and her sad eyes brightened into a kindly smile as they rested on little Louie Tracey in her fresh white dress and blue ribbons.

"How nice Louie looks," she said aside to her mother. "I am so glad you brought her. I never saw her look prettier."

"Yes, I think so too, and I am glad of it. You see all the young ones like to look their best to-night, Mrs. Ransome. Not that it matters for Louie, she is such a child but all the others are on the tip-toe of expectation, longing to see the new colonel. I hear he is extraordinarily handsome."

"Oh, no!—only nice-looking; there is nothing extraordinarily at all about him," replied Mrs. Ransome with unusual quickness.

"You have seen him then?" cried Mrs. Tracey excitedly.

"I used to know Colonel Birch very well indeed some years ago," answered Mrs. Ransome more quietly and with a smile.

Here was a surprise! Mrs. Tracey could hardly believe her ears. She poured forth a string of eager questions. What was he like? Was he really not handsome? Was he clever, good-tempered, high-principled? and was it true that he was looking for a wife?

"That is what we all have heard; they say he makes no secret of it—that he tells everybody that he means to marry as soon as he can suit himself; that is why all the girls are naturally so excited about him: there are so few gentlemen in this parish, Mrs. Ransome, you see. Of course to you it doesn't signify—you have had your day—but for the others——"

Mrs. Ransome only smiled politely and said she had not seen Colonel Birch for so many years that she could not possibly answer for his present character or intentions. And then her smile faded away, and a very sad and serious look came over her face. The other woman's words rang in her ears almost like a knell:

"To you it does not signify. You have had your day."

Not signify that within five minutes she would see Frank Birch once more! Well—it was true enough! How could it signify—*now*? She had "had her day!" Alas! what a sad "day" it had been!

Then all at once the little crowd in the Vicarage drawing-room seemed to fade away into nothingness, and instead of the groups of chattering women in their country-made evening dresses, there arose before her sad grey eyes out of the vistas of the past—another scene, another place.

A wide tumbling sea—a red sandstone cliff—a stretch of shining yellow sand, and two figures standing alone by the sighing waves.

Face to face, hands grasped in hands, they stand, as people do whose very lives are at stake.

And the man's face is dark and angry, and the girl's is tear-stained and pale.

Then the man—that ghost of the past—speaks, and his voice is hot and rough.

"Choose—choose between us," he says. "You do not love him: it is I whom you love; it must be either him or me. Choose between us!"

And then the girl's voice wails back in miserable tempest tossed uncertainty. "I dare not, Frank—I dare not do it; they would half kill me at home. I have not the courage to break with him now."

"Then, good-bye for ever. Go and sell yourself as you wish to a man you mistrust and despise and be wretched for the rest of your life."

After that there was only one figure left between the cliffs and the tossing sea. The man has gone, and the girl lies face downwards, half-flung across a brown seaweed-covered rock, sobbing as if her heart would break.

It is eight years ago! How is it possible, then, that it can matter now to Colonel Birch whether or no he meets Mrs. Ransome in the Vicarage drawing-room at Oakshot!

"Colonel Birch," announced the village grocer, who in a black swallow tail coat and white tie was acting butler for the occasion, and there was an air of intense importance in his aspect as he flung the words loudly and distinctly into the room.

Instantly there was a hush. Every voice was silenced, every eye turned towards the door.

A tall, soldiery, good-looking man entered; he was certainly not "extraordinarily handsome," and yet he was decidedly a distinguished-looking man. Eastern suns had tanned him, and years of travel had roughened and hardened the features that had once been regular and symmetrical. His hair had worn a little thin at the temples and was sprinkled lightly with grey, and his blue eyes were a trifle stern and cold. He did not look the kind of man to be at the mercy of all the female blandishments destined to be showered upon him.

For the present he seemed a little shy and nervous. It was formidable no doubt to be ushered into a roomful of strangers all naturally curious to inspect him as a new comer. His eyes wandered uncertainly round the room—he was conscious of a great many badly-dressed and uninteresting-looking ladies—but he failed to see the slender figure in grey, who sat in a distant window corner somewhat sheltered by the faded green rep curtains.

Mrs. Holton introduced him to several of the older ladies—Mrs. Tracey amongst them. He bowed and spoke a few commonplace words to each.

Then the vicar whispered nervously to his wife, "Have some more music, my dear; it will make them talk," and Mrs. Tracey catching the words came eagerly forward.

"Marian and Sophie will be delighted to sing again, dear Mrs. Holton: they have another duet—a very pretty one. You brought 'Ye Little Birds,' didn't you, Sophy? They are not at all tired: they will sing again with pleasure."

Marian and Sophy fluttered with beating hearts to the piano; the curate's wife sat down to play the accompaniment. There was a hush. Marian cleared her throat, and her first note came out quaveringly and exceedingly flat. No one, however, seemed to notice this, and Sophy dashed in with a gruff contralto, which happily covered and drowned her sister's faltering utterance.

"Are you fond of music, Colonel Birch?" simpered Mrs. Tracey.

"Extremely fond of it," replied the colonel with a grave bow, and then he looked down fixedly at the pattern of the carpet with a little smile, until the little birds had twittered themselves to rest at the final chord of the duet.

"Who are those young ladies?" he asked, turning to Mrs Tracey whilst murmurs of applause arose on every side.

"They are my daughters!" answered the matron, beaming with pride and delight "Come here, my dears, and be introduced to Colonel Birch—my eldest, Marian, and my second, Sophy. Marian, dear, the colonel *dotes* on music." And the mother could not help thinking what a well-suited couple he and her eldest girl would make. "Both tall, both handsome, both musical!" thought the fond mother proudly; "and this," she added as an afterthought, finding that Louie was still at her elbow, "is my youngest child, Louisa—this is her first party!" Colonel Birch's eye wandered past the maturer charms of Marian and Sophy, and rested with a gentle smile of approval upon little Louie.

She looked so childish and simple in her white muslin dress, and her small round face flushed so prettily and naively at being actually introduced to the great man, that the sight of her gave him pleasure.

"So it is your first party, Miss Louisa?" he repeated kindly.

"Yes, she is only sixteen," put in Marian quickly, without giving her sister time to answer for herself. "I tell mama she ought to be in the schoolroom, and with us elder girls to take out I am sure a third is too many. Girls of sixteen are too shy and nervous; they do not really enjoy going out. Do you think so, Colonel Birch?"

"I never was a girl of sixteen," answered the colonel, with his eyes still upon little Louise's blushing face, "so I can't possible express an opinion. What do you say, Miss Louie? Would you prefer to be left at home in the schoolroom?"

"Oh no!" and the forget me-not eyes lifted themselves for one shy trembling moment to his. "I am enjoying it very much."

The colonel wondered to himself what sort of a life it might be, which would

reader such a dreary entertainment as this one a scene of enjoyment to anybody!

"I see you are quite at home already, colonel," here said the voice of the hostess behind him. "Now, would you please be so kind as to take one of these ladies into the next room to have a little light refreshment?"

There was a moment of suspense, Marian and Sophy looked straight before them and tried to appear innocent and unconscious.

Marian, indeed, who anticipated with certainty the honor about to befall her, got very red and began unbuttoning her glove whilst the two Perkin girls rose simultaneously together with a soft rustle of satin on the sofa on which they had been seated hard by, and stood so immediately opposite the colonel that there was no human possibility of his being unable to see them.

Every body round him was waiting to see what he would do.

It was but for a moment, certainly, that he hesitated; but into that moment what a volume of human hopes and fears was there not condensed!

The colonel made a step forward and passed by the elder Misses Tracey.

For one wild moment, Miss Lottie Perkin believed he was making for her, and well nigh fainted for joy.

She said of that moment afterwards, that the room had gone round with her in it; but by the time the room had got her and itself straight again, Colonel Birch was bearing off little Louie Tracey on his arm towards the dining room door.

"Well I never!" murmured one.

"A child of a child like that!" whispered another; whilst Marian and Sophy, sick with disappointment and jealousy, could barely conceal their rage against their favored little sister. Mrs. Tracey alone kept her head.

"Control yourselves, my dears," she whispered with dignity to her elder daughters, "and be thankful at least that he has chosen one of us. It will make it easier to keep him in the family," she added, giving Sophy's arm an angry twitch; "and for heaven's sake, don't look so cross, Sophy. You are making a laughing stock of yourself."

At this moment Mrs. Ransome arose from her corner and sought her father-in-law on the other side of the room.

"I am tired. Shall we go?" she whispered to him.

"Certainly, my dear. I have had quite enough of it. Let us slip away, now that every one is crowding into the refreshment room."

They went into the hall and waited near the door whilst their carriage was being sent for.

The old gentleman carefully wrapped a soft grey cashmere cloak about Margaret's shoulders, tying the satin ribbons himself under her chin with tender fingers, and as he stood before her, engaged in this little affectionate attention over her father-in-law's shoulder she beheld Frank Birch coming right towards her out of the dining-room door, with little Louisa Tracey on his arm.

Their eyes met.

Colonel Birch started; Louie felt herself suddenly dragged forward across the hall.

"Margaret!"

"How do you do, Colonel Birch?" was the quiet reply to an exclamation that was almost a cry in its thrilling intensity.

"Papa, dearest, this is Colonel Birch. I knew him before I was married. My father-in-law's shoulder she beheld Frank Birch coming right towards her out of the dining-room door, with little Louisa Tracey on his arm.

Their eyes met.

Colonel Birch started; Louie felt herself suddenly dragged forward across the hall.

"Margaret!"

"How do you do, Colonel Birch?" was the quiet reply to an exclamation that was almost a cry in its thrilling intensity.

"Papa, dearest, this is Colonel Birch. I knew him before I was married. My father-in-law, Mr. Ransome." The slender gray-gloved fingers had barely touched his energetic outstretched hand. Frank Birch came suddenly back to his senses.

"I am delighted to meet any friend of Mrs. Ransome's, Colonel Birch," the old man was saying courteously, "especially as I hear you have come to be a near neighbor of ours. I hope we shall see you up at the Hall."

"Mr. Ransome's carriage stops the way," shouted the portly grocer at the open door. "Good night—good night!" and then it was all over. The old man hurried her away and in another moment the grey cloak and dark head had vanished away into the night.

The following afternoon Colonel Francis Birch could ringing the bell at the front-door of Oakshot Hall.

The bell clanged harshly, and the colonel turned round upon the top step and waited.

The park lay grey and winter-like before him. The bare trees looked black and desolate.

It was cold, and a chill easterly wind swept in fitful gusts round the corner of the square stone house.

There was nothing hopeful or happy in the prospect; it all looked dead and dreary and desolate.

The colonel's heart, that had beaten oddly all the way up from the lodge gates to the door, sank slowly down to its normal condition as he stood waiting, and he shivered a little with the cold.

It seemed a long time before anybody came to the door.

"Is Mrs. Ransome in?" The footman, whose hair was rough and who was still struggling in the second sleeve of his coat, answered him grumpily:

"Mrs. Ransome has gone hup to town sir."

"To town? Why, I saw her only last night," said the visitor in some surprise.

"Well, they went hup, both she and Mr. Ransome, this morning. It was sudden-like, I believe sir. Mrs. Ransome only made hup her mind this mornin' at post time, so 'er maid told me."

"When will they be back?"

"Can't say, sir; not this side of Christmas I fancy."

The colonel left two cards and went away.

* * * * * * *

Three weeks later Margaret Ransome, still in her travelling cloak and hat, was back again, pouring out five o'clock tea for her father-in-law, in the drawing-room at Oakshot Hall.

It was the last day of the old year—a wild windy night—and they had just arrived from their visit from London.

"Home is nice after all," said Margaret as she handed her father-in-law his cup of tea.

The firelight played warmly over the large handsomely furnished room, in which everything that money and good taste can combine had been gathered together. Rich warm draperies shut out the stormy evening, and valuable pictures, antique furniture and quaint old china made Oakshot Hall drawing room a pleasant place to linger in. There were flowers, too, in every corner and on every table, and a pleasant litter of books, and magazines and feminine handiwork, to make up that delightful look of "home" which only the room of a refined lady can present.

The butler brought in a great rose shaded lamp and stirred the fire, and the old man sipped his tea contentedly whilst Margaret flung off her hat and wraps.

The visitors' bell rang.

"What a nuisance! Who can it be on such a night?" cried Mrs. Ransome. "We were so happy as we were."

A shrill voice was heard outside in the hall.

"It is Mrs. Tracey," ejaculated the squire under his breath in dismay. "I shall go. Great heavens! how I do abominate that woman." And with the customary selfish cowardice of his sex under similar circumstances, he beat a rapid retreat out of a door at the farther side of the room.

Mrs Tracey entered, beaming and glowing with self-esteem and delight, and clasped Margaret again and again with perfect enthusiasm to her maternal breast.

"My dearest Mrs. Ransome, so overjoyed to see you back again—and looking so well too! And how is the dear squire? I couldn't resist coming up at once to greet you home, even though it is so rough and windy. I really have been longing to see you; I could not wait till to-morrow, for I have so much to tell you. I want a good long talk with, dear. You are the only person in this place I can talk with freely, for you are so discreet; I know I can always trust you."

And then Margaret perceived that Mrs. Tracey was simply bursting with some piece of news which she was about to impart to her.

"You have something to tell me, Mrs. Tracey, I can see," she said, sinking kindly. "Now take your tea first, and make your self thoroughly comfortable in this armchair. What is it? Good news, I hope?"

"The very best, dear—at least, though not quite exactly what I might have chosen; still one cannot have everything in this world, and I am very, very thankful, for really three girls are an awful anxiety to a mother, especially in a dead-alive parish like this."

"It is about your girls, then, Mrs. Tracey?"

"About one of them. You remember Colonel Birch who has come to live at Manor Oaks? Oh, yes! by the way, you said you had known him before. Well, we have seen a great deal of him ever since that little gathering at the Vicarage where we first met him. In fact, I may say he has nearly lived at our house—oh, my dear, he is such a nice fellow, so high principled, and superior in every way—and Mr. Tracey hears he has at least four thousand a year."

Margaret was looking at her fixedly and inquiringly.

"Be patient; I am coming to it. Of course I don't mind owning to you that I should have preferred it to be Marian, or even Sophy, for I always do say it's best for girls to get settled in age, and it's apt to make jealousies between sisters when the younger ones get off first. Still, when once I'd made up my mind that it was Louie and not her sisters that the colonel was paying his addresses to——"

"Is Louie engaged to be married to Colonel Birch?" asked Margaret in a strangely quiet voice. "Is that what you are trying to tell me, Mrs Tracey?"

"Well—no, not positively engaged—but it can only be a matter of days now, perhaps even hours! His attentions have been most marked. He singles her out on every occasion—hangs over her, talks to no one else if she is present, and she—dear child! is so desperately in love. He has made her learn the accompaniment to one of his songs. Perhaps you did know that he has a delightful baritone voice?"

Did she not know it!

"And actually," finished Mrs. Tracey triumphantly—"actually he is giving her riding lessons himself and has lent her his best horse to ride. Can anything be more conclusive than that? Why, no man of honor could possibly draw back after it."

For a second or two there was no answer. Mrs Ransome was struggling with the kettle, putting more water into the teapot. She appeared absorbed in her occupation. The rosy light of the lamp shade fell on her face. Mrs. Tracey could never have guessed in its illusive glow that she was even paler than usual. The little silence was not long enough to attract attention—then she spoke.

"I give you my warmest congratulations, Mrs. Tracey. Colonel Birch will make an excellent husband, and dear little Louie is sweet and charming; I hope she will be very happy. He is in luck indeed if he wins her."

The words were quite kindly and heartily spoken, and Mrs. Tracey with a little ebullition of feeling got up and kissed her gratefully. After that she sat down and expatiated for three quarters of an hour upon the great topic.

It was a white weary faced Margaret who rose slowly from her chair, after the door had closed upon her departed visitor. There were lines of pain on her brow and a sensitive quiver of suffering upon her lips.

For some moments she stood immovable by the fireplace, then with a gesture of impatience she caught up her hat and cloak from the sofa. She felt suffocated—the hot room choked her—she wanted air, the buffeting of the cold winds and the solitude of the night. She went out, and hurried almost wildly down the dark avenue. It was a wild stormy night, and the wind howled dismally about her; but Margaret hardly felt it. Her heart was on fire, and something like a sob of anguish broke from her lips out of the pent-up misery within her.

"How wicked I am!" she cried aloud at last, turning her face up towards the dark driving clouds that raced overhead. "Why should it hurt me so? Did I not throw my only chance of happiness away long ago?—oh, God how long ago! Can I blame him now—I who preferred money to love? He has found someone to love him better than I did—I was not worthy of him. I was wise to go away—for now I know that his love is dead, and that time and absence have taught him to forget me."

Then after a long, long pause she said again aloud, but in a softened voice:

"Dear little Louie! God bless her!"

Then she turned, and began stumbling blindly home. The wind had been rising rapidly and now blew almost a hurricane, and the bare branches of the elms clashed their long arms together in mad commotion over her head. Margaret began to run; it struck her all at once that the night was wild and dangerous and that her father in law would be anxious: she ran fast as she could, and the wind seemed to howl and the elm boughs to creak and crash more tumultuously every moment.

Suddenly there was a terrible noise like a volley of musketry exactly over her head; then a roaring, tearing sound like the falling of some heavy object—then above the uproar came a frantic shout:

"Come back, for God's sake; you will be killed!" And some one from behind seized her violently by the shoulders and dragged her backwards—just as a huge arm of the tree crashed down and fell with a mighty thump literally at her feet—so close indeed that the small twigs of its branches lashed against her dress as they struck the earth.

"Mrs. Ransome, is it you?" gasped Colonel Birch as soon as he could speak. "What a narrow escape! You are not hurt, are you, or frightened?"

She disengaged herself quietly from his hand they began walking quickly towards the house.

In that uncertain uncertain light they could not see each other's faces—Margaret was glad of it; all at once she knew that she had sought her battle and had conquered. She could not tell how or why, but she felt that it was so. Before they reached the hall door together she found herself talking to him quietly about Louisa Tracey.

"And you really advise me to marry her?"

"Yes, why not? She is a dear little girl and will make you very happy. You could not do better."

"No, I suppose not," he said doubtfully with a half sigh. "Of course, at my age I cannot pretend to be desperately in love."

"No, only you have taught her to love you," said Mrs. Ransome gently; "after that, to a man of honor there is but one thing to do."

He sighed again wistfully, and tried vainly to distinguish her face in the darkness, for at a word he might still have been hers. But Margaret was not the woman by whom that word could be spoken.

He sighed again—"Well, I am glad I asked your advice." There was a brief silence. "One only loves once, I suppose; that madness of one's first love comes back again, I suppose, Margaret?"

"Never, Frank!" she answered in a low voice; "and sometimes a second love is best," and then she turned round upon the doorstep and held out her hand. "Good-night, dear friend—may your new year begin with a new happiness."

"Good night; thank you, and God bless you," he answered and left her.

Colonel Birch was married to Louie Tracey before January was out, and Margaret, as she stood amongst the crowd in the village church and watched the deep happiness in the little bride's radiant face as she came down the aisle on her husband's arm, had not room in her true womanly heart for one regret, that she had not patched up her own broken past, at the expense of the bright young life whose fate had hung for a moment trembling in a very uncertain balance, on that stormy night on the eve of the New Year.

At Oldtown, Me., a few days ago, a woman was called to the door by her milliner, who wished to collect a bill of $15. The good woman was sorry to disappoint her, but only a few day previous she had invested her ready cash in an organette, and politely ushered her caller into the parlor to examine the instrument. The music roll was adjusted, and as the crank revolved, the room was filled with melodious strains of that ex-popular song "Have Fifteen Dollars in my Inside pocket." The incident was so comical that both sought relief in laughter.

A Strange Compact.

BY T. CHAMBERS.

It was a dreary night in the winter of 17—. Outside, a heavy fog filled the narrow unsavory streets of the Metropolis, and the lungs and eyes of such unfortunates as chanced to be abroad. It even invaded the small wooden sanctum of the night-watchman, interfering with slumbers to which the inmates were both by age and office entitled.

Across the river, in the dingy ill-paved lanes of the Borough, the fog seemed at its worst, a light warmish haze being the only indication of the presence of those shops which still remained open, and round which small ill-clad urchins with the most undoubtable intentions persistently hovered.

"A sweet night for footpads," muttered young Dr. Mostyn, as he disengaged himself from a chance recontre with a post, and felt his way along by tapping with his stout stick at the house-walls, a proceeding by which he had already severely damaged the legs of three of his suffering fellow-creatures, and poked a large hole in the kitchen window of the fourth. "And now," he continued, talking to himself for the sake of company, "or home, for supper and a fire,—Ah, and a patient or two, perhaps. Who knows?"

At this cheering prospect his spirits rose, and he banged mightily at the wall with his stick in consequence, until at length, coming to a small street on his right, he turned smartly down, and having made sure of his own door, knocked briskly at it.

"Who's there?" cried a shrill female voice in response.

"It's I, Bet," said her master. "Open the door, my good girl."

"Not if I knows it," was the cheering reply. "You take yourself off, young man, whoever you are. There's two bull dogs and three men with loaded guns standing by me, to say nothing"——

"Open the door, Bet!" roared her master through the keyhole. "Don't you know me?"

"Is it nine o'clock, or is it eleven?" propounded the damsel; "because if it's eleven o'clock, my eyes deceive me; and if it's nine o'clock, your voice deceives me; for the doctor said he'd be home at eleven and not before; and considering the fog, I should say a great deal after."

"Open the door!" said the surgeon sharply. "I'm back already because my patient's dead. Come; open at once!"

There was a creaking and shooting of bolts as he finished speaking; and the door being cautiously opened, discovered an angular woman of some five-and-thirty years, whose nervous face cleared directly she saw her master.

"I'm asking your pardon for keeping you so long, sir," said she; "but one never knows who's who; and judging by the noises and runnings, there's been rare doings round the corner to night."

"Anybody here, Bet?" asked the surgeon as, a minutes later, he sat down to a carefully grilled chop.

"Not a soul," replied his handmaiden.

"And a nice person you would be to open the door if an accident had arrived."

"Oh, I should have opened it at once," said Bet with decision. "Directly they used the word 'accident,' I should opened it and chanced it."

Her master, smiling at her devotion, drew his chair to the fire, and having carefully filled a long clay pipe, fell to smoking with an air of great enjoyment and content.

Then, thinking it extremely unlikely that he would be disturbed at that late hour, he dismissed his retainer to her quarters in a neighboring house, and being left to himself, lapsed into a brown study.

It might have been the fog, or it might have been the unexpected death of his patient; whatever the cause, his thoughts took a very gloomy direction indeed, and he shook his head despondingly as he thought of his future prospects.

His was not made more cheerful by the room, which was large and dark, and panelled with oak, and ornamented with battered oil-portraits of dead and gone worthies with whom he claimed some kinship more or less remote, who seemed to stare at him to-night in a particularly ghostly not to say wooden manner.

Besides all this, he was in love; and he had no sooner built a magnificent castle—in the air—and placed her in it, than anything but airy landlord called for rent, and the dream was spoiled.

He had been sitting thus for some time, nursing his knee and sipping a glass of not original which he had prepared, when he was disturbed by a loud imperative knocking at the front door; whereat he snatched up one of the guttering candles and marched down the narrow stairs to open it.

The feeble light of the candle, when he had done so, showed him a tall, strongly built man of middle age; whose naturally fine proportions were increased by the fog, which clung to them and exaggerated them.

The surgeon noted that he was decently clad, and also that the embossed hilt of a sword protruded from the skirts of his coat, while his face from some powerful emotion, was pale and drawn.

"Are you the surgeon?" asked the newcomer abruptly.

"At your service," was the reply.—"Come in."

The stranger obeyed, and waiting till the surgeon had secured the door, followed him upstairs.

"Examine me!" said he, taking off his laced coat and standing pale and upright before him.

"Unfasten your shirt," said the other, falling in with his strange humor and commencing a careful examination.

"Well?" inquired the stranger when he had finished:

"Sound as a bell and as hard as oak."

"N t likely to die suddenly?" suggested his visitor.

"No. I should think that that would be the last thing o happen to you," replied the puzzled surgeon. "Why, what is the matter with you? Do you feel ill?"

"No; I feel hale and strong, capable of enjoying life with the best. I've never had an illness in my life. But for all that, I shall die at midnight."

"Of course," said the surgeon, somewhat provoked at all this mystery, "if you are going to kill yourself, you can speak with more authority as to the time than anyone else."

"I have no intention of committing suicide," was the stern rejoinder. "Nevertheless, at midnight my time expires. The manner of my death is unknown to me; but I shall never see the lifting of this dreadful blackness, which on my last night upon earth has fully interposed itself between me and the heaven I have renounced."

The surgeon, listening to this strange outburst, turned to the table, and filling a glass with brandy, handed it to his extraordinary patient. "'Twill put heart into you," said he.

"But not a soul," said the other; and shuddering convulsively, drank it at a draught; then placing the glass upon the table, he drew a purse from his pocket and looked at the surgeon. "Your fee?"

"Nothing. I know what your trouble is; but I wish much that I could help you."

"I'm past all help," said the other sadly, moving towards the door; then pausing, as the surgeon took up one of the candles to light him down, he said in irresolute tones: "As you shall judge, if you care to hear?"

"By all means," said Mostyn heartily, as, replacing the candle, he poked the fire and drew up a chair for his visitor.

"Twenty years ago," said the latter, accepting the proffered seat and leaning towards the surgeon, "my circumstances were very different from what they are now. Young and strong, I had at the death of my parents rejected the bread of dependence offered me by relatives, and full of hope, had come to London to make my fortune. It proved to be harder work than I had anticipated; and in a very short while I was reduced to the verge of starvation. One dreadful night, of which this is the twentieth anniversary, I was half-crazed with poverty and despair. For two days I had not tasted food, nor did I see the slightest prospect of obtaining any. Added to this, I was deeply in love, though unhappily the interference of those who should have been our best friends kept us apart. As I crouched shivering in the garret which served me for a lodging, I think I must have gone a little bit mad." He broke off suddenly, as though unwilling to continue, and stared gloomily at the fire.

"Well?" said the surgeon, who had been listening with much interest.

"Have you ever heard of compacts with the Evil One?" demanded the stranger.

"I have heard of such things," replied the surgeon, on whose spirits the occasion and the visitor were beginning to tell.

"I made one," said the other hoarsely. "Crouched by the empty grate, which mocked me with its cold bars and white ashes, my thoughts turned, as though directed by some unseen power, to all that I had heard and read of such compacts. As my mind dwelt upon it, the subject lost much of its horror, until a gentle rustling in the neighborhood of the fire drove me with quaking heart to my feet. My fears, however, were but momentary, and with fierce determination I called upon my unseen visitor to lend me his awful aid. As I spoke, the sounds suddenly ceased, and a voice seemed to cry in my ear: "Write, write!" I dragged a small table into the moonlight, which struggled through the begrimed panes of the window, and with my own blood and the miserable stump of a pen, wrote out the terms of an agreement with the Prince of Darkness, possessed, as I did so, with the horrible consciousness of something in the room watching me. I vowed that I, for twenty years he gave me wealth and the possession of her whom I loved better than my own life, my soul should be the forfeit. At the next morning brought change of fortune, I should take it for a sign that he had accepted my conditions. I signed it, and swooned.—When I awoke from the sleep into which the stupor had merged, the sun was shining brightly into my foul lodging, and below was a messenger who brought the news of a large fortune which had fallen to me through the death of an uncle. God forbid that my rash vow should have had aught to do with it! Since then, everything has prospered with me. I married the woman I loved. We have a large family. I have kept my secret to myself. To-night at twelve, my time expires."

"The change in your fortunes was a mere coincidence," said the surgeon uneasily.

"Another coincidence for you, then," said his visitor, whose face was now livid. "In the morning, when I awoke, the agreement which I had left on the table had disappeared."

Mostyn rose and, taking great care not to extinguish the flames, snuffed the candles.

"As I supposed my death would be a strictly natural one," continued the stranger, "I thought I would summon a surgeon, in order to see whether my heart was sound, or whether I was to die as I have said, in a perfectly natural manner owing to its disease. A watchman whom I met directed me to your door."

"Do you live in the neighborhood?"

"No—at Westminster," was the reply. "But having put all my affairs in order, and wishing that my dear ones should be no witnesses of my death, I have been roaming about the streets to meet it there."

"Alone?" queried the wondering surgeon.

"I hope so," said the other, with a shudder.

"But guided by me," said the surgeon earnestly. "Return to your home, and forget all about this mysterious compact you fancy you have made."

His companion shook his head and turned to the door.

"Are you going to roam about in the fog again?" asked Mostyn.

"Unless you will let me stay here," said the other, glancing at him wistfully. "You are not nervous?—you do not think I shall die?"

"You will die of fright if you die at all," said the surgeon sturdily. "But stay, and welcome, if you will."

And to avoid the thanks of his guest, he poked the fire until the resulting blaze almost caused the candles to snuff themselves out with envy.

For some time they sat silent. The streets were now entirely deserted, and no sound save the flickering of the fire disturbed the silence of the room.

Then the surgeon arose and, upon hospitable thoughts intent, busied himself with the little spirit-case which stood on the sideboard; and after sundry most musical gurglings from the bottle as it confided its contents to the glasses, appeared in his place again with two steaming potations and a sugar-bowl. "Cognac," said he, "with all its fiery nature subdued, now in its tranquil old age."

"Thanks," said the visitor, taking the proffered glass. "The last toast I shall drink: Long life to you." He tossed off the contents, and again lapsed into silence, while the surgeon slowly smoked his long pipe, removing it at intervals in favor of the spirit he had so highly commended.

Half an hour passed, and a neighboring church clock slowly boomed the hour of eleven. One hour more.

The surgeon glancing at his companion to see what effect the sound had upon him, saw that his eyes were closed and that he breathed heavily.

Rising cautiously to his feet, he felt the pulse of the strong sinewy wrist which hung over the side of the chair, and then, returning to his seat, sat closely regarding him, not without causing certain uneasy glances into the dark corners of the room.

His pipe went out: the fire burnt low, and, seen through the haze of fog and smoke, the motionless figure in the chair seemed suddenly to loom large in front of him and then to be almost obscured by darkness.

* * * * * * *

For a few seconds it seemed his eyes closed. When he opened them the fire was out, and the figure in front of him still sat in the chair, though its head had now fallen on its breast.

Full of a horrible fear, he glanced hurriedly at the clock and saw that it was just upon the stroke of four, then he sprang to the side of his guest and seized the wrist nearest to him. As he did so, he started back with a wild cry of horror, for some slippery thing, darting swiftly between his feet, vanished in the gloom of a neighboring corner.

Ere he could recover himself, the man in front of him stirred uneasily, and rising unsteadily to his feet, gazed stupidly at him. "What's the matter?" he asked at length in dazed tones.

"Matter!" shouted the still trembling surgeon. "Why, it's four hours past midnight, and you are alive and well."

With a violent start as he remembered his position, the stranger glanced at the mantel-shelf. "Four o'clock!" said he—"four o'clock! Thank God, there was no compact!"—Then another fear possessed him: "Is it—is the clock right?"

"To the minute," said the surgeon, standing gravely by with averted head, as his visitor, heedless of his presence, fell upon his knees and buried his face in his hands.

As he rose to his feet, the old church clock slowly struck the hour of four, appearing to both the listeners to do so with an emphasis as unusual as it was welcome. As the last stroke sounded, the stranger who could even now hardly realize his position, threw up the window and expanded his head. The fog had disappeared, the air was crisp and clear, and the distant rumbling of the early market carts betokened the beginning of another day.

"How came I to sleep?" he inquired, closing the window and turning to the surgeon.

"I drugged your drink. It was the only thing I could do. You were in such a strange state of alarm that you would either have died or gone mad if I had not done so."

"The stranger extended his hand and caught the young surgeon in a mighty grasp. You ran a fearful risk! Suppose that I had died. My death would have been attributed to the drug, and you would have been accused of my murder."

"I chanced it," said Mostyn simply. "There was no time for consideration."

"It has been a strange business," said the other. "What could it have been that was in my garret that night, and what could have taken the agreement?"

"Rats," said Mostyn, smiling. "One of them frightened me terribly just now; but it would not have done so if I had not been in a very excited condition. The same state of mind, perhaps, though in a milder form, that you were in on the night you wrote your agreement."

"There were rats in the room, I remember," said the stranger; "but I never once thought of them.—You have saved my reason, if not my life," and he again grasped him by the hand. "You shall not find me ungrateful."

Nor did he; for, aided by his influence, the young surgeon rose rapidly to fame and fortune, which he shared in the most liberal manner with the girl for whom his poverty had long kept him waiting.

FIGURATIVE OR LITERAL.

IN OUR CHILDHOOD'S home we were brought up in a purely religious atmosphere. We did not understand it as we do now in years of maturity. Ministers then did not furnish "milk for babes;" but rather off-spoke us meat as for strong men. Their stately figurative language confused us and we were too shy to tell them so. Not many preachers in those days used the simple childlike eloquence of a Beecher or Talmadge, and more's the pity. Our Sunday school and week-day teachers were of the same stripe.

On those blessed old-fashioned puritan sabbaths! The Yankee baked beans for breakfast, the clean clothes sweet with the smell of lavender; and the gay delaine dresses laid in a row on the spare-room bed.

The chickens had a subdued Sunday cackle, the golden sunshine lit up the distant hills, and:

"The dew was on the flowers,
The air was full of June."

Our mother nurse said: "do you feel able children, for the two mile walk;" all the family were expected to attend church and went. We did not often ride, my aged grandfather had notions and always quoted that line:

"A merciful man is merciful to his beast."

Good sensible church people we met on the way, who never hesitated for the foolish ceremony of introductions in rural places. Occasionally when we grew restless we were allowed to go outside and sit near the baptismal pool and gather spearmint in a quiet pious way, not too close though, for one darling baby with yellow curls leaned over "to see the baby" in its crystal depths and was drowned.

Clergymen of all denominations made our house their stopping place. One said to me once in a stately manner: "Child don't you want to partake of the Bread of Life." "We said no sir, not unless it is like gingerbread; my mamma knows how to make good wheat bread."

A dear minister with silvery hair, used always in his petitions to remember the children, when he addressed the throne of grace. We remember that he prayed that the Lord would "take away our hearts of stone and give us hearts of flesh." How it troubled us. We'd slip our brown sun burnt hand under our apron over our beating heart and hope that God would let us just keep the kind of hearts we had. They thumped away faithfully. Anyhow could He do it? Would He cut us open with a sharp bread knife and pull them out and put in others without killing us? Impossible. It was a puzzle and kept us awake at nights.

He was the same clergy who had so much to say about "going into our closets for prayer." We resolved that when we went to his house to visit his daughter Lotty we'd ask her to show us her papa's wonderful little closet. It suggested to us a sort of curiosity shop full of pretty things and a good place to play with our dolls. We knew no better then a big girl.

Friend Agnes said she was likewise worried over figurative terms in her poor motherless childhood. One time she and an older brother went on a picnic to the bank of a small but rapid stream. She had often heard preachers tell of "casting bread upon the waters." They had some lunch left and Agnes said: "Charlie, you know what the Bible says about this, so I'm going to cast the biscuits on the water and maybe after many days 'they'll return' in the shape of a delicious frosted cake.

The brother agreed. For days after this, these two children went to the stream expecting to see a nice iced cake coming sailing to them on the crest of a wave; but it never came. They began to doubt His promises, and confided in a good aunt who made plain the scriptural meaning of the term to these disappointed children. Agnes is now a millionary among the freedmen; and I'm sure she never continues hers.

A chapter in an old school reader begins thus: "I despise a narrow field." Cousin Ruth a little puzzled scholar, thought it meant a narrow piece of lot like her papa's calf pasture. She often glanced at it and wondered why anyone should have an antipathy to an inoffensive grassy calf pasture where the sleek baby calves cropped the juicy grasses and did no harm.

"Can you tell me children the meaning of the golden rule," said a prim teacher to us the first day we ever were at school. We looked at Lucy Bacon and she rolled up the whites of her wondering eyes at little Mary Ann Rickets in astonishment. We smoothed down our starched bib aprons and said: "no mam." Well, I will tell you and she went to her desk and we looked at each other delighted. We supposed it was a bright gilt stick which maybe she'd give to us to put in our poorly furnished play-house. How disappointed we were when it came out. People are mistaken when they speak of joyous childhood: it is often a time of perplexity and doubt.

Mrs. L. R. S.

AT HOME AND ABROAD.

A blind-mannered man got on a New York car recently and offered a $2 bill for his fare. The conductor refused to change it, and while he was making up the required $1.95 the suave gentleman started and said he believed he did have just a nickel. While he was fumbling in his trousers pocket the conductor returned the bill nicely folded. But the nickel couldn't be found, and a bill which looked like the $2 was handed back to the conductor. The suave gentleman got the change, and after riding a couple of blocks alighted. He had given the conductor a $1 bill instead of the $2 bill. Over forty conductors were swindled in a similar manner in this way.

There are said to be only two olive groves in California, and one, owned by W. R. Smallman, in Georgia. Mr. Smallman's grove covers three acres. He was asked recently how olive growing compared with cotton raising, as a financial investment, and is reported to have replied: "You can make no comparison, there is so much more profit in the olives. Why, I make 250 gallons of oil every year. That readily sells on an average of $5 a gallon, or the total out-put of $1250. That is all clear profit, too; for I get enough of the pickles to pay all expenses. What three acres can you put to better use and make it produce a yield of $1250 clear money? Yes, sir, I find a market for all my oil and pickles."

James Kennedy, 11 years old, who lives at 323 East Seventy-second street, New York, had a marvellous escape from death, recently. He and some companions had been chasing pigeons on the roofs of houses near the former's home, and James was getting over a low wall, between 321 and 323 when a telephone wire to which he hung broke. He crashed through the glass of the hood of the air shaft of 321 and went like a bullet to the cellar, six stories below, just grazing a cross beam in his descent. His comrades ran away, afraid to tell what had happened, and it was several minutes before James was discovered. The only injuries he received were a bruise of the hip, a cut chin and lacerations of the fingers, and, as soon as he was found, he was able to talk and drink water. Later in the day he was a little feverish, but the doctor said he would get well.

A Lusignan descendant of the Kings of Jerusalem died miserably lately in a hospital in Milan. A Marquis, descendant from the Doges is selling matches in the streets of Venice; in the same city a porter at one of the most splendid palaces keeps the door of the house where he ought to be master. At Naples, the Duc de Lerma, grandee of Spain, is a lawyer's clerk. At Palermo the Duc de Santa Croce goes about the streets picking up cigar ends and anything else to be found. The Princess Pignatelli is a singer in a cafe chantant in Berlin. At Buenos Ayres there is a lovely flower girl about twenty, who, when asked where she came from replied that she was a Lombard, but that her parents were Romans of the name of Peoci. The girl, whose name was Leonilda Peoci, when asked if she was a relative of His Holiness, said she did not know, but in her family it was believed they were nearly akin.

A new comer to St. Louis, addressing a reporter of that city: "I will tell a true story of a thing which is old and odd, if not musical. N t long since we moved here from Arkansas, where generations of our folks had kept house. Searching recently in a trunk we brought I found a wealth of relics. One was a bundle of biscuits wrapped in a copy of a Franklinville paper, dated January 3 1823. The bread had evidently been laid away, and, the weather being cold, the boarders had refused to eat cold biscuits. That was before baking powder was in vogue. They are so tempered by age that they actually ring fo th a metallic sound, which I think would not feed the soul of a hungry wood chopper with rapturous melody. What would I take for them? Nothing. We will keep these biscuits as a family heirloom. I would like to hear from anyone who has a biscuit more entitled to wishkers."

A special from Charleston, S. C., says: Truman Canady was found dead in his little hut some miles from Georgetown, recently. Canady had led a strange and romantic life, and was as well known in South Carolina as "the Old Leather man" was in New York State. Over fifty years ago he fell in love with a fair cousin. When he proposed marriage was startled that he had won her heart, but told him that their blood relationship was an insurmountable bar to their union. After a year spent in fruitless efforts to induce her to change her mind, Canady was shocked one day to learn that she had entered a convent. He became morose and melancholy, and finally wandered away from home to lead the life of a hermit. He absolutely refused to have any dealings with the rest of mankind, and, though often seen on the highroads of the State, he is not known to have held communication with anyone for over twenty years. He finally settled down near Georgetown and built the little hut in which he was found dead.

The Doctor—Why have I never married? Why should I? Eat and dig meat best. The Admiral—Not in my case. The doctor—Oh, pshaw, now, everybody knows—Come here, how do you manage it? The admiral.—All case.

Our Young Folks.

BUNNY'S FRIEND.

BY W. K.

"WELL, uncle, what did you think of the performing dogs we saw in the streets to-day?" asked Jessie, when they had returned home from a ramble in one of the London parks.

"Very interesting," replied Uncle Oliver. "But, you know, Jess, that's all a matter of training. Now when I was at Berlin some time ago I saw a still stranger case of friendship between two animals, one of which, as a rule, feeds upon the other."

"Would you mind telling us about it, uncle?" was the next question.

"Not at all, my dears—after dinner."

Uncle Oliver was a great traveller, and when he came to stay with them, as he did now and then, his nephews and nieces generally kept him very busy relating stories of his adventures, or of the fine sights he was in the habit of seeing in "foreign parts." They used to turn him on after dinner or tea, as if he were a water-tap.

"I suppose," said he, peeling an orange, "you know that Berlin is the capital of Germany, and I may inform you that there, as well as in London, they have a splendid collection of wild animals in their Zoological Gardens."

"I've been to Regent's Park 'Zoo,'" put in little Jack, "and had a ride on an elephant."

"Jack, please do be quiet, and leave Uncle Noll alone," remarked Jessie somewhat sharply.

"It's all right, Jessie. Some day Jack will be able to tell other little folk about his experiences."

"Well, I was once strolling through the Berlin Gardens, when my attention was called by one of the keepers to a cage containing a lynx and a rabbit."

"Excuse me, uncle, for interrupting you," said Jess, already forgetting her rebuke of Jack, "but I am not quite sure that we all understand what a lynx is. Of course, I do," she thought it necessary to add, "but the younger ones may not."

"That means, I suppose," replied Uncle Oliver, laughing, "that they only go to what is called a 'dame's school,' while you go to a 'college for young ladies.'"

"A lynx, you must know, is a very wild cat indeed, and in a state of nature nothing would gratify it more than to dine off a few rabbits. You may imagine, then, what I felt when I saw so harmless a creature as bunny caged up with a member of the fierce and bloodthirsty lynx family!"

"Oh—oh—oh!" gasped the children.

"The two animals, however," Uncle Oliver remarked, "were the best of friends. They were both very young, and had been together from infancy almost. That was the chief, if not the only, reason for their good fellowship. Often and often had the lynx been seen toying——"

"But, uncle, I thought you saw them only once?" said Jessie, in a sort of puzzled voice.

"Quite right, my dear. But I spent an hour with the keeper on that occasion, and he gave me a full, true, and particular account of the career and habits of our two friends. Well, as I was saying, the lynx used often to be seen toying with bunny's ears while it was nibbling at its food, or lying at full length nursing the rabbit within its fore legs, and looking very pleased indeed.

"Of course they didn't always play together. The future of the lynx was a matter of much more importance than that of bunny. So the keeper had to watch over its education. One thing that the young lynx had to learn was to leap well. To cause it to leap, a sparrow used to be introduced into the cage; and I was told that the lynx was very active in its efforts to catch the poor bird—jumping up at the sparrow while bunny was busy washing its snout. The bird was sometimes killed; and I must say that another method of teaching the lynx how to jump might have been employed."

"Right, right!" "So glad you think so!" cried the bairns; only Jessie gravely said, "Hear, hear!"

"It must have been a pretty sight to see the two animals at their games. No kittens could be more playful. The make-believe of the lynx especially often afforded very good fun. Rabbits feed on green stuff, while lynxes go in for a meat diet. To see this strangely-matched couple eating cabbage—bunny in earnest, lynxie in jest—was therefore very comical.

"But this was quite a harmless game compared with another kind of romps which, I am sure, must have been invented by the lynx. These two creatures actually played at worrying one another! First, the lynx would lie down, and bunny, looking very innocent in its white coat, would pretend to worry it. Then the lynx would attack bunny, all in fun; although occasionally the keeper was in great dread lest what had begun in sport might end too tragically for the rabbit.

"At length the end did come——"

"Oh, uncle!"

"Yes; but not in the way you fear. Bunny fell ill and died. And just to make this singular friendship perfect, as well as to prove it is still the case that truth is stranger than fiction, the lynx refused to be comforted when it lost its playmate. The keeper thought at one time that the creature would have starved itself to death. At last it occurred to him to remove it to another cage in quiet a different part of the Gardens. This change had the desired effect. In a few days the lynx became itself again—only more so; for had a new rabbit been admitted to its den it would have no doubt been killed in the twinkling of an eye.

"Now, Jessie," added Uncle Oliver, as he rose from the table, "what say you to that strange friendship?"

GRUB AND BUTTERFLY.

BY M. HAYCRAFT.

A SUNSHINY morning in May. What can be more delicious to the eye and the heart?

When white and pink thorns are in blossom, the throstle sings all day, the air is sweet with the scent of flowering shrubs, there is a hum of joyous life everywhere, and evil seems to have no place for a time in a world where all is so fair.

Seems—ay, there lies the rub, and the word should be written in shadows, for things are not always what they seem, and in the heart of an opening rose lay a green grub, rejoicing in the sweetness and purity he so soon meant to destroy.

Above hovered a milk-white butterfly newly risen from the prison of her old grub life, and such was her surprise and delight that she tried to sing of them, and share them with all whom she met.

"Friend," cried Butterfly to the crawler on the rose, "is it not wonderful to think we shall rise like this? It is not worth living, suffering, dying for? We cannot be too thankful for the boon of a second life, for our wings, our beauty——"

"We!" echoed the other coldly, and there was scorn in the glance he turned upwards. "Say I, and I believe you; you and I have nothing in common. Be off, for you keep the sunshine and chill me by the breeze you make in fluttering above there. You'd better talk to those who are more likely to be credulous than myself."

Just then the sky clouded over, and Butterfly, nothing daunted by this rebuff, though she looked more sober, came to a standstill with folded wings on the outer petals of Grub's flower.

"There is no sun now," she said gently; "and so not drive me away with harsh words, when soon, very soon, if you will only have patience, you will join me in this freedom, this new existence, and be no longer forced to crawl from leaf to leaf on the spray where you were born."

"Nonsense!" was the impatient rejoinder. "I make a point of never believing what I cannot see; only foolish people do otherwise. Do you mean to tell me in sober earnest that you ever wore a jacket like mine, and crept about the roses, feeling as I do that life is just one long feast? Pshaw!" and the speaker moved on a pace to take a mouthful from the creamy-looking stuff spread so temptingly before his eyes.

Butterfly grew very grave, and she trembled slightly, but that might have been due to a breath from the south breeze which passed at the moment, making all the flowers bow in acknowledgement of his presence.

For the breeze was an important person among them, and was known to have influence with the rainkeeper, on whose bounty the whole garden depended.

"If we could see everything, understand everything, friend, there would be nothing left to believe; and I think it is only the foolish ones, on the contrary, who laugh to scorn what really exists, though they are too blind to see it, or too narrow-minded to confess their defect of vision. I was, indeed, like you not many days ago; I am what you see, and, mark my words, the same glorious change will befall you: ay, every member of our family, and every branch of it. When the time comes, remember what I have said, and you will then humbly confess yourself in the wrong in the joy, the thankfulness——"

"Oh, have done!" broke in the listener, his anger rising, "I am content with what I have, and neither want nor believe things will ever be different. Leave me in peace, and tell your fine tales to others."

"Yes, go, lovely Butterfly," whispered a voice close by; "your prophecy falls on deaf ears, your warnings are wasted. Leave me to deal with Grub, and trouble yourself no more about him."

Slowly, sorrowfully then the white wings were once more spread, and their owner took flight, after looking in surprise at the last speaker, who, it proved had heard all that passed from the shelter of a honeysuckle close by.

It was none other than Oberon, the fairy king himself, who spent the heat of the day securely hidden from mortal eyes among the petals or in the bells of flowers. To the bee he was sometimes visible, but never as a thing of dread, for the busy creature knew his majesty neither stole honey nor murdered those who gathered it, and all his followers always conducted themselves equally well.

The king wore a grass-colored suit, and a simple dewdrop sparkled on his brow in token of royality—a token that never failed to win respect; and even Grub grovelled lower than before when he caught sight of it, being dazzled by its beams.

"You silly thing!" cried Oberon contemptuously, as he poised himself lightly where Butterfly had been a minute before, and gave a little stamp with his foot. "He who will not wear the spectacles of faith can not recognize hope, and he who will not believe in the possibility of good must be prepared for the sowing of evil seed, for the reaping of evil fruit."

A terror sudden and vague seized upon Grub, and he tried to creep out of the king's sight, but food and vain glory had made his green jacket swell till it was out of the question for the wearer to efface himself at a moment's notice.

By-and-by he glanced up, and was conscious of a new comer flitting above the rose where he crouched trembling—a new comer gayly dressed in red, with lacy wings on either side of his slim figure.

Grub buried his face in the scented depths of the nearest petals, and trembled more than ever, for a stab in the back made him nearly shriek for fear and pain, and he knew not what was coming next.

"Look at me and listen," said Oberon, in such a peremptory tone that the hearer dared not disobey. "Your friend did her best to rouse in your sluggish mind a spirit of belief and thankfulness by the light of her own experience; but it is a sad fact that nobody will take the gift of others' experience. Foolish people and children must always buy it (and very costly it is sometimes), because they fancy they know best; and the worst of it is, this folly opens the door to endless evils. As for you, you will in truth rise again, as Butterfly said, though not, like her, to a gladsome life of beauty and innocence. No; you have wilfully harbored low desires, scornful thoughts of those who are better than you are, and your second life will be one of danger to yourself, discomfort and mischief making to others."

"Ha, ha!" laughed a derisive voice as the king ended his speech; you will become one of us. I've laid my egg securely in your fat back; that was the stab that you felt just now. A long life to the security of ignorance!"

Grub lifted his head and looked all round, feeling puzzled both by the words and the speaker, but the latter was nowhere to be seen, and the king had retired to the shade of his honeysuckle.

"It's a dream, it must be a dream!" muttered Grub, beginning to feel again. "I am quite well, and that stab in my back, though it was startling, does not hurt much. Perhaps the fairy monarch touched me with his wand in my sleep!"

After this the hours sped peacefully by, and apparently, Grub was right, for he ate, rested, and grew, after the manner of his tribe, and no ill befell him, in spite of dangers always at hand in the shape of hungry birds.

Presently the crawler felt as if night were coming—at least, the time for a long rest—and understanding that some change was at hand, he crept downwards on to a spray of rose-leaves with a strong stem, and there began in a corner to spin himself a hammock of white web.

"I believe butterfly may have spoken truly," he murmured sleepily, "and this is no death, for I am sleek and well, conscious neither of ailment nor bodily decay."

The creature's slow brain refused at this stage to argue more, and soon he was wrapped in a profound slumber, disturbed by no song of bird, no hum of bee, and none of the numberless voices of Nature that sounded from day to day round his resting place.

The white roses fluttered in a scented shower to the grass below, the honeysuckle blossoms turned orange, then brown, and withered lingering on their stems till the breeze bid them part. Still Grub slept on. Eglantine and hay made sweet the summer air, red and white foxgloves stood proudly up along the high-banked hedgerows, like guards for the frailer flowers below, the chorus of feathered songsters died away into the silence of content in home happiness—still Grub slept on.

At last there came a day when the sleeper felt faint stirrings within him of renewed life. He stretched, he struggled, he gnawed through what once was a cradle, but now had become a prison-house, and then paused on its threshold, gasping for breath, filled with wonder.

"What has happened?" thought he. "The whole world seems to have changed—ay, even my very self. I must be somebody else. And yet—yet I remember before going to sleep, long ago, Butterfly told me I should wake up some day like her. I, too, have wings," and here the astonished owner slowly spread them with admiring eyes, "still they are not broad and white like Butterfly's. Ah, yes!"

This exclamation was caused by a further effort of memory, and Oberon's words returned to him.

"Seeing's believing," said the newly-risen, casting a contemptuous glance below at the relics of grub existence. "Away with dull thoughts! If I am not a butterfly, I have at least a gift in common with many better folk, and shall make the best of it."

So saying, the speaker spread his wings and sailed far aloft into the summer air, intent, it must be owned, on selfish enjoyment, without a thought of the trouble it might cause to others.

This was not wonderful, seeing that Grub, instead of changing, as he should by rights have done, to a milk white harmless butterfly, had become an ichneumon fly—an insect hated by every winged race as a cunning spy and a thief.

And it was not long before the marauder in search of pleasure found out this hatred, which caused all to flee his face, turn aside to avoid a meeting, or hide till he had passed.

To see this filled him with bitterness, and from the dregs of a better nature rose regret for a folly which—blindly indulged—had cost him so dear; but he was not left many days to torment others or try to stifle regret.

For danger lurked in the presence of every insect bigger than himself, not to mention birds and men; and while resting an instant one evening on a daisy the foot of a careless passer-by crushed flower and fly together to the earth.

Few saw the accident, fewer cared, and none mourned the end of a life that brought no joy to others; for in faith lies hope, and hope walks hand-in-hand with love, but Grub, having missed the first, had failed also to find the last two.

NEVER TELL LIES.—It is stated that over 70,000 dolls have been manufactured at Sonnenberg, in Thuringia, and sent to America to be charged with the phonograph. A story of a speaking doll is told by a friend of Edison's in New York, which points out that these new toys may act as moral teachers to the young. Edison's friend had a little daughter, four years old, who, in spite of scoldings and punishment, could not be cured of a habit of telling stories. The father brought home a specially charged doll as a present for the little girl. The child played with the doll for a day without noticing anything different in it from her other dolls; on the morning of the second day, however, the doll made its voice heard. The little girl gave her mother an untruthful answer to a question which was put to her; whereupon the doll, which was in her arms at that moment, said solemnly: "Little girl must never tell lies, Never, tell lies." The child stared at the doll, and laid it down on the carpet. Since that time she cannot be persuaded to touch her plaything, but the timely warning has cured her more effectually of her bad habbit than any whipping or scolding could do.

BOOK-KEEPING.—In several Continental countries—in France, Italy, Germany, Denmark, Sweden—the law requires that all persons carrying on trade shall keep certain prescribed books, so that in the event of disaster some idea may be formed as to the good faith and honesty of the business.

A LOCK OF HAIR.

BY J. H. ECCLES.

I have a lock of flaxen hair,
Wrapt in a tiny fold,
'Tis hoarded with a miser's care,
'Tis dearer far than gold.

To other eyes of little worth,
Yet precious unto mine;
For once, dear child, in life and health,
It was a lock of thine.

The number'd hours pass slowly by;
Days, weeks, and months depart,
Yet still the vacant place remains
Unchanged within the heart.

'Tis all that now remains of thee;
Light of your home and hearth;
While sadly pass the silent hours,
And dark the days come forth.

Yet still I keep it for thy sake,
And guard it with fond care;
And oft I view, with throbbing heart,
Thy simple lock of hair.

ABOUT THE DOVE.

To the Assyrians and Syrians the dove has been the special emblem of the God head ever since the Ninevite sculptor typified the Supreme Being by an orb with the tail and wings of a dove hovering above the head of his Master. In fact, the worship of the dove and the various circumstances of the Deluge have always entered very largely into the religious rites and ceremonies of the Eastern world.

In very many countries the dove is intimately connected, not only with the religion, but with the superstitions of the various peoples; and the number of legends about the dove is very large, and not a few extremely interesting.

To return to the Deluge. There is a curious Arabic legend respecting the dove, which states that the first time it returned to the ark it was with the olive branch, but without any indication of the state of the earth itself, but that on its return from the second visit, the red appearance of its feet proved that the mud on which it had walked was already freed from the waters, and to record that event Noah prayed that the feet of these birds might for ever remain of that color.

Among the many testimonies of the truth of the Deluge to be found among the Western nations is an ancient coin known by the name of the Apamean medal from having been struck in Apamea, a city of Bythinia. It has on its reverse side an epitome of the Deluge. It represents the ark as a kind of square machine floating upon water on which a man and woman are just visible through an opening, and over the ark a triangular pediment. Upon this sits a dove, and below it another, which seems to flutter its wings, and holds in its mouth a small branch of a tree.

It is said that the Holy Spirit, under the form of a dove, designated Joseph as the spouse of the Virgin Mary by lighting on his head, and that in the same manner Fabian was indicated as the divinely-appointed Bishop of Rome.

A dove or pigeon is considered by the Russians to be a living picture of the Holy Spirit, and therefore no Russian peasant will eat one

There is a curious story told of Mahomet. It seems that he possessed a tame dove, which he trained to come to his ear for seed; this the bird did at length quite naturally, as it never failed to find some there.

Mahomet's object was to convince his followers that the dove was the representative of the angel Gabriel, and that Divine messages were thus communicated to him.

A still stranger thing is related of him. It appears that in his flight he entered a cave with his companions to hide from his pursuers, and no sooner had he taken refuge than two pigeons laid their eggs at the entrance, and a spider covered up the opening with her web so effectually as to baffle those who were seeking him.

In many of the paintings of the Madonna the dove is introduced as the emblem of the Holy Spirit; in others, doves are placed near her while reading or working, expressive of tenderness and gentleness.

A very strong belief exists among many peoples of the earth that the soul quits the body in the form of a bird, and this has been the subject of superstitious fancies from earliest times.

A bird always signifies the soul in Egyptian hieroglyphics, and the dove carrying in its beak a branch of palm or olive is a common emblem upon ancient tombs.

Therefore, taking these facts into consideration, it is not surprising that numerous stories exist in which disembodied spirits appear as doves.

In the life of St. Elizabeth we find reference made to the belief that doves hover about a dying person, awaiting the departure of the soul from the body.

Again, in the lenged of St. Polycarp, who was burned alive, it is said that his blood extinguished the flames, and that from his ashes a white dove arose and flew towards Heaven. From the funeral pyre of Joan of Arc a dove was seen issuing.

The Russians have a belief that the departed haunt their old homes for the space of six weeks, during which time they eat and drink, and watch the sorrowing of the mourners, and then fly away to be at rest. Therefore, it is a common practice in some districts to place breadcrumbs on a piece of white linen at the window during these weeks, and the soul is believed to come and feed upon them in the shape of pigeons.

Then, also, the dove is regarded as a lucky bird, bringing good fortune to the house, the city, the person, and the ship As an example of this, the credulous firmly believe that the pigeons in Venice are in some way connected with its prosperity, and that their being domesticated in the midst of the city is a sign that it will not be swallowed up by the water. It is unnecessary to say that they are protected by the almost superstitious care and affection of the people of Venice.

The dove is the type of love, probably from its clinging to the partner of its nest with such uniform constancy.

"Venus and her doves" is a phrase known to us all; not less so is the famous representation of Venus with her son Cupid riding on a chariot drawn by doves.

The story goes that the Uranian or heavenly Venus was not born from the sea foam, as was believed, but from an egg which two fishes conveyed to the seashore, and that this egg was hatched by two pigeons, whiter than snow, and gave birth to the Assyrian Venus, who instructed mankind in religion, virtue, and equity.

Those who have been fortunate enough to go to Rome have probably seen the celebrated doves of Pliny in the museum of the Capitol. It is one of the finest specimens of ancient mosaics in existence. It represents four doves drinking. The mosaic is formed of natural stones, so small that a hundred and sixty pieces cover only a square inch.

One could give many more such stories, but enough has been said to show the character of this bird for gentleness, purity, kindness, and the appreciation of these qualities by all peoples of the earth.

Grains of Gold.

One vice worn out makes us wiser than fifty tutors.

All who wish to be rich must spend less than they earn.

Brevity is the child of silence, and is a credit to its parentage.

The miserablest day we live there is many a better thing to do than die.

The slander of some people is as great a recommendation as the praise of others.

No man ever did a designed injury to another without doing a greater to himself.

To lament the past continuously is rather a hindrance than a help to bettering the future.

If you would render your children helpless all their lives, never compel or permit them to help themselves.

Work in spite of yourself, and make a habit of work; and, when the habit of work is formed, it will be transfigured into the love of work.

Discontent is not only an evil in itself, but it implies some evil behind it, and to discover its source is more useful than to rail against its existence.

Of all the thousand enemies that lie ambushed along the journey of human life there is not one that does not shrink and cower before a clear intellect, a potent will, and an honest intent.

It is a mistake to suppose that work, when properly directed, will ever cause a premature break-down either of body or mind. Uniform industry is as conducive to health as is regularity in diet.

We are apt to ascribe our good or bad fortune to our last action only, and not to the many preceeding actions; and we hear, when we inquire of ourselves, as when we ask echo, only the last words repeated.

When the Icelander awakes, he salutes no person until he has saluted God. He usually hastens to the door, adores there the author of his being, then steps to the house, and says to his family, "God grant you a good day."

Femininities.

We pardon infidelities, but we do not forget them.

Magnificent promises are always to be suspected.

Men love little and often; women much and rarely.

Widows, like ripe fruit, drop easily from their perch.

Society is ever ready to worship success, but it rarely forgives failure.

Our thoughts should travel from the brain to the lips by the way of the heart.

Purity of heart is the noblest inheritance, and love the fairest ornament of woman.

The obedience of children to their parents is the basis of all good government.

The virtue which has never been attacked by temptation is deserving of no monument.

Women have the understanding of the heart, which is better than that of the head.

In condemning women for vanity, men complain of the fire they themselves have kindled.

The English newspapers are writing column-and-a-half editorial paragraphs upon the subject of the decline of breach of promise suits.

You might not think it, but there are scores of fine ladies in this city who are better shots with the rifle than many skilled marksmen are.

A sensible man made the following will: "If I die I want my wife to have what I got." This shows loyalty to his better half, and a sensible contempt for legal verbiage.

Miss Caller: "I called on purpose to see your dear little baby. Is it a boy or a girl?" Mrs. Four Hundred: "Why, it is a—a—really, I shall have to ask the nurse."

Two young women were expelled from the Bridgeport, Conn., Normal School on the day upon which they were to graduate. Their offence was riding a tandem bicycle.

Mrs. Jinks: "So you have taken another companion for better or worse." Mrs. Seconds: "Only for better, my dear. He can't possibly be worse than the other one was."

The achievements of Miss Bisland and Miss Bly are monuments of what plucky, fearless American girls can do. They certainly can perform deeds that would astonish their grandmothers.

There was a funeral in Paris, Ky., lately in which eight women acted as pall-bearers. Sarah Jones, colored, was the person buried, and eight sisters of a colored lodge bore the remains into the church.

Adorer, after a rebuke by the old lady: "I didn't kiss you; I only pretended I was going to. Why did you call your mother?" Sweet girl, repentantly: "I—I didn't know she was in the house."

Mr. Fangle, (looking over the house he has just moved into): "I wonder who lived here last?" Mrs. Fangle: "I don't know; but the lady was a Christian." "How can you tell?" "She left no rubbish in the cellar."

All this talk about women being sensitive as regards their ages, is mere bosh. In New York lately Mrs. Ann Devine, the prosecutrix in a larceny case, unhesitatingly made the declaration that she is 105 years old.

A Michigan widow killed three birds with one stone by inserting in the same issue of an Adrian daily her husband's obituary notice, a card of thanks and a notice that she would auction off her late partner's personal effects.

"Now, remember, Belinda," said Mrs. Sharpley to her daughter, just married, "violence in anything is most unladylike. Of course, you will sometimes disagree with your husband, but always hit him with the soft end of the broom."

"Well, my dear madam, and how are you to-day?" "Oh, Doctor, I have terrible pains all over my whole body, and it seems impossible to breathe! Of course, I can't sleep at all; and I haven't a particle of appetite!" "But otherwise you feel all right, don't you?"

Percy Walker and Miss Emily Herald, of Hamilton, Ont., were parties to a mock marriage while playing private theatricals in 1884. The young lady is now about to marry another in earnest, and has brought suit for the annulment of the first marriage in order to avoid trouble in future.

"Perhaps," said the fresh young man, as he plumped himself down on the sofa between the two giddy girls, "perhaps you were discussing some choice secret?" "Oh, no," said one of them; "I was just saying to Minnie that 'nothing should separate us,' but really I didn't expect it to happen so soon." And the beating of his own heart was all the sound he heard.

In the museum of the London Royal College of Surgeons, London, is the stomach of a woman who had been an incorrigible pin swallower from the tender age of two years. In a box beside the stomach is a quantity of black and rusty pins taken out after death. In another box are more pins found in the woman's pocket, and supposed to have been meant for swallowing when occasion offered.

About a month ago the Prince of Wales had a sealskin jacket made for her lap dog in Paris, and the important fact was cabled over half the civilized world. It was not of any profound degree of importance, but the result is amusing. One of the most prominent furriers in New York made twelve jackets for dogs immediately on seeing the news in the paper, and they were all sold within two weeks. The claims of the Princess of Wales to be a leader of fashion are beyond dispute.

"Darling," said the young man, as he tenderly raised the lovely head from the place where it had rested for an hour or more, got up, sat down again on the other side of the beautiful maiden, and once more drew the golden curls to his bosom, "you have no objection to this slight change of position, have you?" "No, Alfred," she murmured, "your heart is on this side." "Yes, my angel," responded the young man, his voice trembling with deep feeling, "and my vest will now be soiled alike on both sides."

Masculinities.

Passion is a fever that leaves us weaker than it finds us.

In order to get the wild oats out of a boy he must be thrashed.

He who loses not his senses in certain things has no senses to lose.

He who adopts a just thought participates in the merit of him who originated it.

A great man is one who can make his children obey him when they are out of his sight.

There is hardly any man so friendless in this world that he hasn't at least one friend to tell him his faults.

Life, as we have often said, is full of compensations. The tongue of the deaf mute never gets him into trouble.

Exhorter: "I tell you, young man, you are going straight to Hades." Young man: "All right, old fel. See you later!"

There are few things in the world really worth getting angry about, but there are lots of things that justify a man in getting mad.

The night shirt of fashion is becoming a thing of gorgeousness. A China silk robe, hand embroidered in blue, pink or maroon, is one of the most prized effects.

It is worthy of note that the embroidered shirt front has become a general favorite for day wear, while for evening use fashionable men have practically discarded it.

For it comes to pass oft that a terrible oath, with a swaggering accent, sharply twanged off, gives manhood more approbation than ever proof itself would have earned him.

Some men will get up out of bed at night in the coldest of winter weather to go to a fire, who cannot be induced to get up at 7 o'clock to start one in the kitchen stove.

Fops and extreme dressers, in imitation of the Parisian dude, are affecting black silk handkerchiefs with evening dress. The fad is regarded as repugnant alike to good taste and common sense.

A matter of fact philosopher asserts that "Love is to domestic life what butter is to bread—it possesses little nourishment in itself, but gives substantials a grand relish, without which they would be hard to swallow."

Johnnie: "You've got a cold in your head, have you?" Cholly, calling on Johnnie's sister: "Yes, a very bad cold." "Then sister was wrong." "Wrong in what?" "She said you hadn't anything in your head at all."

Young George Stokes was escorting home Sarah Horton, his sweetheart, recently, at Pelsall, England, and was so busy entertaining her that neither one of them heard the express train that came along just as they were crossing the track. Both were killed.

Any one looking closely at General Butler's hands will notice that the base of his right thumb is a very well developed, full and firm piece of flesh, while at the same place on his left hand it is very much shrunken and fallen away. The difference is due to shaking hands.

The revival of the soft hat is one of the inscrutable fancies of the season. It is worn by club men, brokers, mercantile men and dudes. Plenty of business men have discarded the silk hat altogether except for evening wear. The Derby, however, continues to hold its own.

De Courcy: "French society proposes, I see, to ostracise M. B., who killed M. F. in a duel." De Vere: "Perfectly proper." "Yes; they say that M. B. has dishonored himself." "He has violated the unwritten code, which requires that no gentleman shall hurt another in a French duel."

First tramp: "Let's go up to this house and see if we can get a bite." Second tramp: "Not by a long chalk." "Why not? Do they keep a dog?" "No, but there's a newly married couple living there, and the young wife gave me one of her pies the other day, and it nearly killed me."

A man, named Wallace, in the employ of the Portland, Maine, Stoneware Company, is singularly unlucky. A while ago he had three fingers chopped off by a clay-cutter, then he was kicked nearly to death by a horse, and recently a big lump of frozen clay fell on one of his legs and broke it.

As a clergyman was burying a corpse, a woman came and touched him by the sleeve, in the middle of the service, and said, "Sir, I must speak to you immediately." "Well, what is the matter?" "Why, sir, you are burying a man who died of the smallpox near my poor husband, who never had it."

"There is one error in diet," said the doctor, "which, if pursued for a not very long time, is certain to result in death." "What is that, doctor?" asked the patient, anxiously. "Not eating anything," said the doctor, grimly; and, shaking the patient's hand feebly, he staggered to the open door.

They say that "Variety is the Spice of Life," said the tramp. If it is I've had enough of spice to last me for a long time to come. I was run over by a Hardic at 8 o'clock last night, bitten by a yellow dog at 9, clubbed by a policeman at 12, sentenced to 10 days this morning; if that is not variety I would like to know what you call it?"

"Yes, sah, Miss Angelina played a powerful mean trick on me. At the ch'ch festival t'other night, sah, I slipped and split my plate of bilin' hot soup in de lap ob Miss Angelina's bran' new satin dress." "And what did the lady do?" "Why, dem de time she showed her manners. She jest jumped right up an' split it all 'fore I could take one drop of it. An' it was 'possum soup at dat, sah."

Blanche: "Good afternoon. Back from Niagara? How did you enjoy your wedding trip?" Maude: "Oh, splendidly! It was all so new and strange! I saw so much that I had never seen before that I can hardly describe my sensations." Blanche: "Ah, I suppose so! And your husband; was he as much pleased?" Maude: "I'm afraid not. You see, it was an old story to him. He has been over the same route and seen the same things so many times!" Blanche: "True; I forgot that."

Recent Book Issues.

"The County Fair" is an affecting and vivid story of domestic joy and sorrow, of home life and rural scenes. It is founded on the play of the same name. Street & Smith, New York, publishers.

A souvenir of "The Dead Heart" the famous play recently revived in England with great success by Henry Irving, has been issued in fine illustrated style by Cassell & Co., New York. For sale by Wanamaker.

LAW AND ITS APPLICATION.—It is an imperative duty and obligation that each and every man should inform himself and instruct those under his charge and supervision in the application and the force of the laws for the government of the people in the suppression of immoral ity and vice and inculcating what is best for the happiness and prosperity of society. No man puts an injury to another without both knowing that it is an injury, and that he runs the risk of heavy punishment for it; he has a lively apprehension that there is somewhere a rod hanging up for his own shoulders, though he may not be very solicitous to inquire into the exact nature of it. Obedience to the laws is the great and comprehensive duty of every member of human society,—because law is no other than the system of practical ethics by which men are to comfort themselves for the good of all. The cognate subjects of morals are politics and political economy. Hearsay evidence should not be accepted as evidence in any legal case of any importance because it is not proof positive but merely an assumptive appearance which cannot stand sifting and the light of facts. The faults of lawyers and even judges are that they dwell too much on precedents, and not enough on the exigencies of the times and occasions; not on reason and common sense as their guide and rule for action and decision. To obey the law is the great comprehensive duty of every man; to learn what duty comprehends is necessary and wise. Law stands rooted in the soil of human reason by virtue of the protection it extends to all.

L. G. W.

A LITTLE GIRL'S COMPOSITION.—The caterpillar is a crawling thing and bears all over his back and fannie found one down her back and it made me orall like every thing, birds eat caterpillars and give them to their children to eat. I don't see how they can eat them, I know I could not eat them, they are such horrid things, they look so ofly and feel I don't know how. Caterpillars climb trees, the other day I saw a big, big caterpillar and he was so horrid that I took a stick and kild him with it and threw it away to let the swill man pick it up and take it home perlod caterpillars have 1000 or more legs, he may not have so many, and he may have more the big ones have more than the little I guess that but I don't know. Caterpillars eat flies and other insects such as ants, mieaiaes and others like that. Also they eat leaves, plum leaves and in short all kinds and some flowers to, some have baby caterpillars, in short all of them. Caterpillars drink water, in short every thing they can get. Catterpillars. I cannot say much more about catterpillars, but our good rool is never throw a catterpillar at a man of anybody for it gives him such a fright. I have told you all they eat, drink how many legs it has and tim rool. A catterpillar can climb, you cannot. Ma be some of you can, I cant, but most of the things that a catterpillar can do we cannot, and most of the things that we can do they cannot.

SCIENTIFIC ADVANCES.—"Wanted, expert needlewomen to make babies' bodices." "Well, that beats all!" exclaimed Mrs. Partington, throwing down the newspaper in which, during the last fifteen minutes, she had been spelling out the advertisements, and peering indignantly over her spectacles across the breakfast table at Ike, who was busily occupied in excavating his fourth egg-shell. "Did ever anybody hear the like! I always said it was as good as tel'in' Natur' she didn't know how to do her own work when they instructed steam rams and donkey engines. But this imposterous idea of makin' a cop work babies is enough to make the poor thing throw down her tools, and shut up shop altogether. Mark my words, Ike—them sewin' machines will be pressed into this 'ere new fangled business afore long; and then all the emigratin' in the world won't be able to keep down the surplice poppylation."

DIDN'T LIKE THE TEACHER.—"Are you still taking painting lessons, Mamie?"

"No; I left off yesterday. I don't like my teacher."

"Why not?"

"He has such a disagreeable way of talking." He told me if I kept on for sometime longer, I might be able to whitewash a fence."

VIRTUE is not so versatile in its nature, as to be impracticable in any possible condition of human life.

IF TRAVELLERS toward heaven miss their way, the sun will be altogether their own.

It affords instant relief and speedy cure to all sufferers from rheumatism. Salvation Oil!

All children troubled with coughs or colds should *at once* use Dr. Bull's Cough Syrup.

WORKING-HOURS ABROAD.

SO FAR as regards laws regulating the number of hours a man shall work, the great majority of our representatives in foreign lands have the same story to tell—that such laws are non existent.

Of the different states forming the Empire of Germany, none have any special enactments on the subject, the Imperial legislature alone being competent to deal with it, and that body has left adult labor entirely unfettered, except in forbidding the employment of women in certain kinds of work, and enacting that employers may not compel their workmen to ply their vocations upon Sundays or feast days, only where the special nature of an industry precludes the work being postponed or interrupted Belgian Labor Commission.

Neither in Sweden, Denmark, the Netherlands, Spain, Portugal, Russia, Italy, Greece, nor Turkey has the idea of fixing the limits of a working-day by law been entertained; while the Roumanians, Bulgarians, Servians, and Montenegrins, if they agree in nothing else, are of one mind as to leaving masters and men to make such arrangements as they deem best for their interests.

Very little information is vouchsafed as to the actual working hours in the countries where freedom of contract remains unchallenged; but we are not left quite in the dark.

We learn that a Turkish working-day lasts from sunrise to sunset, with certain intervals for refreshment and repose.

In Montenegro the day-laborer begins work between five and six in the morning, knocks off at eight for half an hour, works on till noon, rests until two, and then labors on until sunset. This is in summer. In winter, he commences working at half-past seven or eight, rests from twelve to one, and works uninterruptedly from that time to sunset.

The rules respecting skilled labor are theoretically the same, but considerable laxity prevails in practice.

In Servia the principle of individual convenience rules in every case. In England ten hours is the rule with trades. In Portugal from sunrise to sunset is the usual length of the working-day.

With field laborers and workmen in the building trade the summer working-day begins at half-past four or five in the morning and ends at seven in the evening, two to three hours' rest being taken in the middle of the day.

In winter the hours are from half past seven to five, with a shorter interval of repose.

In manufactories the rule is twelve hours in summer and ten in winter, with an hour and a half allowed for meals.

Eleven hours is the average day's labor in Belgium; but brewers' men work from ten to seventeen hours; brickmakers, sixteen; the cabinetmakers of Brussels and Ghent are often at work seventeen hours, a day; tramway drivers are on duty from fifteen to seventeen hours, with an hour and a half off at noon; railway guards sometimes know what it is to work nineteen and a half hours at a stretch; and in the mining districts women are often kept at truck-loading and similar heavy labor for thirteen or fourteen hours.

The normal work-day throughout Saxony is thirteen hours, with two hours' allowance for meal-taking.

In Baden the medium duration of labor is from ten to twelve hours; but in some cases it far exceeds this, often rising to fifteen hours in stoneware and china works and cotton mills; in sawmills to seventeen hours; while the workers in the sugar-refineries, where the shift system is in vogue, work for twenty-four hours, and then have twenty four hours free; and in two many of the Baden factories Sunday-work is the rule.

In Russia industrial establishments, the difference in the working hours is something extraordinary, varying from six to twenty. "It is remarkable that these great divergences occur in the same branches of industry within the same inspector's district, and among establishments whose produce realizes the same market price."

The only European States in which the law controls, or pretends to control, the disposal of a grown man or woman's time are Austria, Switzerland, and France.

In the first-named, the factory hand must not work more than eleven hours a day, exclusive of an hour and a half for refreshment and recuperation; and in mines the actual working shift is limited to ten hours; but these rules are liable to modification with the joint consent of the Minister of the Interior and the Minister of Commerce; while in special cases the Industrial Officer of the district is empowered to permit a temporary increase in the working-hours for a period of three week or less.

A permanent extension of time has for some reason been given by ministerial ordinance to spinning-mills and silk factories, by which the hours of labor have been lengthened to twelve and thirteen hours respectfully.

In Switzerland, a normal working day must not exceed eleven hours, with one hour's interval, comprised between the hours of 5 A. M. and 8 P. M. during the months of June, July, and August; and between 6 A. M. and 8 P. M., during the remainder of the year, the time to be regulated by the town clock. On Saturdays and holidays the workshops must be closed two hours earlier.

Exceptional and temporary prolongation of the working-time is obtainable in cases of necessity, "but not simply to suit the convenience of the employer."

Sunday labor, except where it is absolutely necessary, is prohibited altogether; and under no circumstances in feminine labor permissible on that day.

On ordinary days any woman having a household to look after is free to leave the shop one half-hour before the mid-day rest.

The hours of adult labor in France are regulated by a serious of decrees, the earliest of which, promulgated in 1848, enacted that the working-man's day in manufactories and mills shall not exceed twelve hours of effective labor."

In 1851 another decree exempted certain occupations from the limitation; and in 1885 it was officially laid down that the twelve hours' limit was confined to such manufactories and mills as were moved by machinery by day, or machinery in motion by day and night without extinction of fires; and that no workshops employing less than twenty-one hands in any one shed came under the law of 1848.

Of the six or seven million people earning daily wages in France, not more than a million are computed to be subject to the provisions of that law; indeed, the Inspectors of Factories only record three hundred and fifty-nine thousand adults, of whom fourty-one per cent. are women; and it may be accepted that Frenchmen in factories pass at least fourteen out of every twenty four hours in the factory; while the workers outside, such as carpenters, masons, and laborers, work for any number of hours inclination may prompt or necessity compel.

SUNNY FLORIDA.

Editor SATURDAY EVENING POST:—I have now spent four delightful weeks in this delightful climate, where we have weather in February equal to our finest June weather at the north. The change from our cheerless rainy winter was a very pleasant one, and I can scarce realise the discomforts of the winter at home.

Oranges and alligators abound and the oranges fresh picked from the tree are much sweeter and more luscious than the packed fruit we get at home. The alligators I have not tried yet. The woods are gay with beautiful wild flowers, and the sweet jasmine which is now in full bloom fairly loads the air with its delicious fragrance. The long grey Spanish moss grows abundantly, hanging from the tree tops in long graceful festoons, yards in length. This moss is much prized at the north for decorative purposes, and may be draped over pictures, chandeliers or anywhere that fancy may dictate with very pretty effect. A great many people have asked me to mail them some of it. If any of the readers of THE POST would like to have some of this beautiful moss I shall be glad to oblige them.

MRS. F. A. WARNER,
Jacksonville, Fla.

LIFE ON THE STAGE.—All the stage-struck girls throughout the length and breadth of the land fancy that an actress' life must be an ideal one, full of adulation, flattery, amusement, distraction. An actress was speaking of this to me. She is a woman who, by dint of arduous work, has climbed far up the ladder of fame.

"My life is very uneventful," she said: "It is full of hard and monotonous work. Excitement? yes, at night, when I am before the public; but for the rest of the day, no. Suppose I give you one day's routine, and you can judge yourself whether my life is one round of exhilaration and pleasure. At nine in the morning I ring for my bouillon. After I have finished it I take a cold bath and then my breakfast. Unless I am due at the theatre for a long, tedious rehearsal of four or five hours, I attend to my correspondence, sorting and answering various letters. After that is finished, and my household duties are looked after, I go for my constitutional walk of two or three hours. I eat no luncheon, and when I return from my exercise it is nearly time for my dinner, for I dine at half-past four. After this meal is over I have just a little time to rest before the real business of the twenty-four hours begins. I must be at the theatre by half-past seven sharp. At midnight I am home again, and after supper I go to bed. Now that is a fair sample of my life. Every hour has its duties. I have systematized my work and allotted my time so that there are very few idle moments."

WHAT THEY CALL IT.—Among vague terms applied to the future world are "the great hereafter," "the other word," "futurity," "the great somewhere else," "the after life," "the farther shore," "the spirit world," "the unseen universe," "another life," "the great beyond." It is unnecessary to inform you that "the sweet unknown" is an American term. A famous Frenchman, when dying, said that he was about to go into the "great perhaps." Similar terms are the "dim unknown" and the "unknown dark." In poetry the future world is "the happy land, far, far away." "the land o' the leal," "the world beyond the stars," "daybreak," "the mansions of light," "Jerusalem the golden," "the better land," "the realms of the blessed," "the happy isles," "beyond the waveless sea," "the fair home above," "the realms of endless day," "the celestial shore," "the harbor of rest," "the sovereign, dim, illimitable ground." Camoens terms it "the Lethean dungeon" and "the sombre shades avernal." Anglo-Saxon poems refer to "the green wolds of paradise." Mrs. Barbauld call's it "the brighter clime." Goethe speaks of joining "the ghostly nation." Shakespeare terms it "the undiscovered country" and "from whose bourn no traveller returns." Edgar Allan Poe calls it "the distant Aidenn," "the Plutonian shore" and "the Lethean peace of the skies."

FORTY PUNS IN A SENTENCE.—In looking over the map of France the names strike one as similar in sound to English words that have entirely different meanings. For instance, the following sentence describing a short trip to France contains 40 English puns on 33 French words: When I Olse in France I wanted to visit Nancy, whom I Metz some time Befort, and with whom I knew I could Havre Nice time in the Reims of fancy; and I wished to make Aix clean Breast of my Louvre, but I was in such a Fleury that I was on the Bordeaux of despair, and that would have been Toulon Toulouse, and I had Notre Dame moment to spare; besides there were Lyons in Loire France, and it was Bayonne my expected Tours, and as it seemed likely Touraine any day, I was Seine enough not to Donai Calais thing and Rouen my Creuse home, for that wouldn't Pays, so I determined to Mende my Corse, should I Nevers see her again; but I shall Macon other trip Somme time when I Caen.

"BOTTLED SUNSHINE."—There are persons who will work for the good of their fellow-men, who will give money and time, labor and thought, to reforms and schemes for general welfare, who will not hesitate to make sacrifices to perform benevolent and kindly actions, but who never give free and hearty utterance to the gladness that they feel or the pleasure they enjoy. It is not that they intend to deprive any one of happiness, but they do not realize how much they could thus bestow. While trying in many ways to give light and warmth to their fellow-men, they bottle up their own sunshine, forgetting that its influence might extend far and wide. Let all such pernicious silence be speedily broken. If the day is fair, and the air pure and clear, let us emphasize the fact; if we see any beauty, let us point it out; if we feel any joy, let us hasten to share it; if we have received any good, let us freely express it.

"AND now, children," remarked Professor Hailes, in one of the public schools the other day, "if a family consisting of father and mother and seven children should have a pie for dinner, how much would each one receive?" "Why," remarked the bright boy, "each would get an eighth." "But there are nine persons, you must remember." "Oh, I know that; but the mother wouldn't get any. There wouldn't be enough to go around."

THE PERSONAL DISCOMFORT, and the worry of a Constant Cough, and the Soreness of Lungs and Throat which usually attend it, are all remedied by Dr. D. Jayne's Expectorant, a safe medicine for Pulmonary disorders and Throat Affections.

Humorous.

FOUND HE DIDN'T KNOW IT ALL.

Behind him closed the college gates;
A way to enter life he sped;
"Success now my endeavor awaits,
For I know everything," he said.

The youth a fortune to amass
Adopted every honest plan;
'Twas vain; he found himself, alas!
A disappointed man.

With growing age he wiser grew,
And when he reached life's closing stage
He sighed, "How much in youth I knew;
How little in mine age!"

—U. N. NONE

The family circle—A wedding ring.

The undertaker's favorite exercise is boxing.

Language of the sole—The creaking of one's boots.

Lost in reflection—Contemplating one's self in a mirror.

What roof covers the most noisy tenant? The roof of the mouth.

It is worthy of remark that an oyster never gets into a broil while he's in liquor.

A man at a fair was asked if his horse was timid. "Not at all," said he; "he frequently spends the whole night by himself in a stable."

Stranger, trying to be friendly: "How is your health?" Dyspeptic, grufly. "How do I know? I haven't had any for the last five years."

"How is your toothache getting along?" "Had as ever." "I thought you said the dentist was going to kill the nerve?" "So he did; but it dies hard."

An electric piano is the latest invention. We hardly see the need of it, however. Nine tenths of the performances on ordinary pianos are shocking enough.

Mrs Rich, excitedly: "Baby has swallowed my watch? Dear, dear, dear, what shall I do?" Watchmaker: "Let him swallow the chain; then pull."

Little Fisxen Hair: "Papa, it's raining!" Papa, somewhat annoyed by work in hand; "Well, let it rain." Little Fisxen Hair, timidly: "I was going to."

Small boy: "Ma, can me and Sally have some cake?" Parent: "Johnnie, you must learn to speak grammatically." Small boy: "All right. Can I have some cake?"

"Oh, Abner Dusenberry!" she cried, in consternation. "Look at that child! He's dabbled all over with jelly. I told you to mind him." "I did, my dear, but he wouldn't mind me."

A gentleman who was determined to out do the horticulturist who raised chickens from egg plants, has succeeded in producing a colt from a horse-chestnut and a calf from a cow-ard.

The outburst of a hitherto patient boarder: "Mrs. Starvem, I can stand having hash every day in the week, but when on Sunday you put raisins in it and call it mince pie, I draw the line."

A mother, to her bad boy: "Master Tom, stand in the corner." Master Tom: "Wot for?" His mother: "Because you're a bad boy." Master Tom: "Can't I be a bad boy standin' here just as well?"

A Dutchman being advised to rub his limbs well with brandy for the rheumatism, said he had heard of the remedy, but added, "I dush better as dat—I drinks de prandy, and den I rubs mine leg mit de pottle."

"I always look out for No 1" remarked a selfish fellow who had just married a red-headed widow. "Well, you needn't worry yourself about it any longer," she replied significantly. "I will look out for you hereafter."

"Did your son take a degree in college?" said a gentleman to a lady who was enthusiastically praising the ability of her offspring. "No, indeed, he didn't," she replied, with pride. "He didn't take anything. He is the healthiest boy you ever saw."

A lawyer once pleaded with great ability the cause of his client for nearly an hour. When he had done, his antagonist, with a supercilious sneer, said he did not understand a word the other said, who merely replied, "I believe it; for I was speaking law."

Kitchen Broom: "Hair Brush, will you allow me to present my friend, Stove Pipe?" Hair Brush: "No, thanks; he doesn't carry himself straight enough to suit me." Stove Pipe, scarifully: "For a thing that wears bristles, you are very fastidious."

Mr. Rheinheimer: "Did you hat some good singin' at der Germania Maennerchor Club House last night?" Mr. Dannerwetter: "No, we could not haf much singin'. Der moosic was played out." "Vas der best singer absent?" "No, but der beer gave out early in der efenin'."

A certain Scotchman, who is not a member of the temperance society, being asked by a dealer to purchase some fine old Jamaica rum, drily answered: "To tell you the truth, sir, I canna say I'm very fond o' rum; for if I take mair than sax tumblers, it's very apt to gie a body the headache."

Schlaumeyer calls at an inquiry office, and says: "Can you tell me if Lippmann, senior, of Hamburg, is solvent? I have a bill on him." "The man is good for any amount; the only pity is that he is blind." Schlaumeyer drops into a chair as if shot. "Blind!" he exclaims; "then I'm done—the bill is made payable at sight."

At some religious ceremony at which the late Archbishop of Dublin was to officiate in the country, a young curate who attended him grew very nervous as to their being late. "My good young friend," said the archbishop, "I can only say to you what the criminal going to be hanged said to those around, who were hurrying him, 'Let us take our time; they can't begin without us.'"

RELIEVED HER FEELINGS.—A little girl had been very anxious to peep in upon the grown-up world and find out what kind of conversation took place between her mother and her friends.

She begged to be permitted to stay in the drawing room when her mother received visitors, and at last she was granted permission. She was very quiet, and sat demurely for a long time and listened.

Then she went out, and presently a curious noise of thuds and knocks was heard outside. It was not very loud.

Presently she came in again and took her seat, sat patiently a little longer, and got up and went out. Again the same peculiar noise was heard.

After the visitors had gone, her mother called her and said—

"What were you doing out there?" Why did you leave the room?"

"Well, I'll tell you, mamma. I got so very tired of hearing those women talk that I went out into the hall and turned somersaults to relieve my feelings."

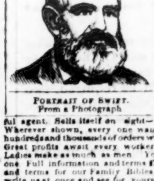
How many grown up people have felt that they would like to do the same when they have been suffering from bores.

THERE is about one lawyer for every 900 persons in the United States, or about twice as many as there is any need of, according to David Dudley Field. The medical profession is confessedly overcrowded, and yet an enumeration by the Illinois State Board of Health shows 6 500 doctors in that State, or about one for every 680 persons. Two doctors at least ought to find employment where one lawyer does, but the proportions here would seem to show that either the legal profession was vastly overcrowded or the medical thinly populated. The Massachusetts census of 1885 shows one doctor for every 618 persons in the State, or a proportion very similar to that in Illinois. The number of physicians in Chicago has been increased by over 500 in three years, while in 61 rural counties there has been a falling off of 170.

GRACE.—All our ideas of grace, when analyzed, will be found to be based upon economy of force. The hard and angular movements which betray much effort to little purpose are never graceful or pleasant. It is only when the object to be gained is achieved with apparent ease, or at least without an undue expenditure of force, that we call the process graceful and derive pleasure from witnessing it. This ease of performance and economy of force, while largely gained by continual practice, is also dependent upon the equable development of the different parts of the body and powers of the mind. Without this, health and happiness cannot be full and complete, and we all know that the healthy and happy man or woman is both the most interesting and the most valuable.

A MAN MAY have a right to stint himself of comforts and even necessaries if he prefers to employ in other directions the money thus saved, but he has no right to deny his wife, his children, his servants, their proper comforts and luxuries that he may buy old china or rare books.

Watch these columns 2 or 3 weeks for a Voice from Illinois.



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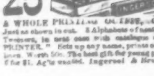

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MRS. EDMONDSON GORTER,
Oak Lodge Thorpe,
Norwich, Norfolk, England.

Nov. 29, '88.

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Latest Fashion Phases.

A new version of the trotteuse gown, more elegant and better contrived than the former examples of that kind, is a skirt of black lace, accordion pleated, with three deep sharply vandyked or pointed panels at front and sides, made of a beautiful shell patterned black brocade, bordered and tasselled with jet. A removable train of the same brocade, made like a Court train, so that it can be caught up over the arm, converts a very smart visiting gown into a rich evening dress in two seconds.

We have seen two particularly good models for black cloth gowns; the first having a draped plain skirt of black cloth cut out into applique embroidery on black faille, to the depth of some 3 feet, and bordered with black fur. The close-fitting bodice is entirely of the applique; with full sleeves of the plain cloth, set into tight long cuffs of the applique at the elbow; while the gown is completed by a frilled jabot of black crepe lisse, from throat to waist.

The other gown is a polonaise of cloth, opening sideways, and trimmed with widening revers of Astrakan and black silk passementerie, over a plain skirt bordered with Astrakan.

These are a few of the most effective gowns; but the mantles are not less handsome. It is long since the models for cloaks have been so graceful and so dignified, independent of the vagaries of fashion. A black cloth semi-fitting driving coat, or cassock, reaching to the heels, is fashioned after the manner of the garments of the fourteenth century Florentines, with square gorget and tight fitting sleeves, with reversed epaulettes of Astrakan, and a border of the same fur down the front, while all the seams are marked with lines of fine black gimp.

Another graceful and less severe model is a long half-fitting coat of black and gray brocbe, with short wing sleeves of black velvet; while a splendid evening mantle, also reaching to the hem of the dress, is a shaped redingote of reddish-violet plush, with hanging sleeves to the ground, and high collar, opening to the waist, lined and bordered with white Thibet fur.

To the tea gowns it is difficult to do justice in a written description, and one especially is extraordinarily fanciful and brilliant. It is of the surprise order of attire — "as shines the moon in clouded skies," so its wearer might enter, swathed and draped in clinging folds of pale blue-gray Indian silk, wrapped round her in shawl fashion.

Suddenly, with an upward movement of the arms, she would fling back the two long, soft, ample scarves, fastened in at the shoulders, which compose the drapery, so that they should fall like a straight mantle behind to her feet, mingling with the rest of the full back, which is of the same blue-gray silk, and revealing in front the most gorgeous garment imaginable—a rendering of Japanese embroidery, flowers and clouds and butterflies, wrought by a Parisian artist, on a background of black satin, in gold and silver and all manner of lovely colors, pearl and azure and amethyst; and cut at the throat so as to show to the waist a glimpse of the soft whiteness of a blouse or shirt of lisse, while from beneath bell sleeves of the embroidered satin peep bishop's sleeves of the white lisse.

Another wonderful tea gown is modelled on ancient German modes of the time of Maximilian, being made of a thick repped silk in a rich shade, something betwixt petunia and heliotrope. The whole of the back of the full bodice is gaged, and a square collar of point lace is set into a Holbein yoke and braces of dark purple velvet embroidered silver, while the full sleeves are set into cuffs to match. It is rich, original, and artistic this gown, even if it miss something of the fantastic grace of the Parisian-Japanese model above described. They are well cut and draped, and made of good brocbe, and no one who orders the gown from seeing its pictorial representation need fear disappointment on an acquaintance with the original.

All the bird hat trimmings come from the back, loops, wings, or feathers. At one side of some of the hats a close succession of small wings lie along the upturned brim, a few more being placed among the trimming. Soft felt hats are turned up in every conceivable way, some brims being quite grotesque, resting on velvet bands, and perched up quite on the top of the head. Red and black is a popular mixture, and black wings and jet are particularly prominent in millinery. The muff very often matches the hat. Hats are much more worn than bonnets by women of all ages.

Black moire petticoats, lined with red flannel, are fashionable this winter. They are plain, with all the fulness concentrated at the back, and take about 5 yards to make. They can also be had in dark red, navy blue, or in light colors, for evening wear; but the black ones are the most chic. Colored flannel petticoats are also more popular than white ones.

Some have embroidered frills, others insertions of coarse lace, and others tucks. Pretty dressing jackets of flannel, with large collars and turned-back cuffs of deep cream worsted lace, are warm wear for wintry mornings. Directoire scarves of silk crepe, in all colors, are worn, instead of fur, with some of the high-collared coats; they are passed round the throat, tied in a bow, and pushed into the open coat front; the coat is usually fastened across the chest.

These scarves are also worn indoors with Directoire bodices, and form a vest. The Cairo gold embroidery, for cuffs, collars, and vest, is still most popular, and is perfectly untarnishable; it may be had on white, bright red, light green, and biscuit colored cloth, and can be easily adapted to any gown.

Beautiful embroidery on velvet can now be had, all complete, for a long Louis XV. waistcoat, cuffs, revers, pockets, and collar. One handsome design is small wild roses and leaves on ruby velvet.

Fringed guipure, very rich in design, is sold for low bodices, and also smart day wear. For the former, it begins on each shoulder, takes the form of the low bodice, and has graduated fringe in front, reaching at the deepest, below the waist; that for day wear takes the form of a Sanorita jacket, also commencing at the shoulders, and is deeply fringed, falling on each hip. Crystal fringes, falling over color, especially pink or yellow, are used on evening gown, and form a tablier or a panel.

Cherry-stick umbrellas, with painted cherries on the handle, are quaint. The cherries are most natural in appearance. Some handles are arranged to contain a long, narrow smelling-bottle; others (for travellers) a small candle, which will burn for two hours, and is protected by glass, forming a miniature lamp.

I observed the hair is worn frise on the forehead—not in a mass like the general fringe, but small curls arranged separately, and having a lighter effect than the fringe. The rest of the hair is still dressed high, with the effect of making the head look as small as possible. This is always considered elegant and *distingue*.

Wonderfully quaint and exquisite in work are some of the newest models in underclothing, one noteworthy item being a petticoat of the finest lawn, with two rows of antique Valenciennes let in and kilted from waist to hem in accordion plaits, headed by three rows of fine gauging. At the waist the skirt is set into a wide band of trou trou of white lace, run through with six rows of narrow blue ribbon, all tying behind in tiny bows, and so fastening the skirt.

A marvelous combination of pale pink silk, trimmed with a profusion of white Valenciennes lace, has an overskirt of the same, run into tucks to the knee, where comes a row of insertion, and then a fancifully plaited flounce frilled with wide Valenciennes.

The skirt and bodice are set at the waist into either side of a Swiss belt, composed of insertion of the pink silk and narrow white insertion. The fulness of the bodice in front is so arranged as to form a berthe round the shoulders adorned with Valenciennes insertion, while at the back, where it is fastened, it is gathered closely into tucks to the waist, the band at the back being straight.

These elegancies are of French device, as is a pretty nightgown of novel fashion, with no opening at the chest, but with the neck made wide, and drawn in or out by means of a ribbon, so that the gown can be slipped on or off over the head.

Odds and Ends.

ABOUT THE KITCHEN.

Lobster Croquettes.—Cut some lobster in small dice, add to it half its quantity of cooked and chopped mushrooms, and the same quantity of bread panade (made with milk) as mushrooms, or half the quantity of bread panade and half of cold chopped fish; put all in a stewpan with sufficient thick bechamel sauce to bind the ingredients, make hot, then turn on to a plate to get cold. When cold mould into croquettes (they look well pear-shaped), roll them in egg, then in fine dry breadcrumbs, and fry in plenty of boiling fat.

Fried Oysters a la Provencale.—Take two dozen oysters, squeeze a little lemon-juice over, then throw them into boiling water for three minutes, take them out, drain, and wipe them, remove the beards and place the oysters on a plate; put a little pepper, finely-chopped parsley and oil over them, then take up two at a time, dip in butter, and throw into boiling fat; when they are a pale brown drain, and sprinkle with salt. Place the oysters on a dish on a folded serviette, garnish with fried parsley and cut lemons.

Batter for Oysters.—Take a teacupful of flour, add a little salt and two tablespoonfuls of olive oil, moisten gradually with tepid water or beer (if with the latter keep the batter tolerably near the fire for an hour or two before it is used), it should be quite smooth and not to thick; just before using stir in lightly the well-beaten whites of two eggs.

Oyster Kromeskys.—Choose large oysters, poach them in a very little water with a squeeze of lemon-juice, drain, and let them get cold, then beard and cut the oysters in small square pieces; add some good bechamel sauce (warm) that has been boiled down with some of the liquor in which the oysters were cooked (or make a little thick white sauce of the liquor, with butter, flour, and cream added to it); add a small piece of melted glaze, season with a little nutmeg, and let it cool. When cold take pieces of about the size of a small egg, flatten them, have ready some thin pancakes, cut in pieces all the same size and shape, put each piece of oyster mixture between two pieces of pancake; ten minutes before serving dip the kromeskys in frying batter, put them in hot fat, fry a nice color, drain, and serve heaped on a serviette.

Oyster Crusts.—Cut some small pieces of bread, half an inch thick, trim them into ovals, hollow one side, fry them in butter, and keep hot. Beard some oysters, cut them in pieces, stew the beards in a very little water; when done take out the beards, put some good bechamel sauce, a little cayenne pepper, and the oysters in, add two or three tablespoonfuls of good cream, finish with a little butter. Fill the pieces of hot fried bread with this, and serve. These are sometimes covered with fine breadcrumbs and a little oiled butter, and glazed with salamander.

Angels on Horseback.—Beard some large oysters, pepper, and dip them in oiled butter or in oil. Cut some thin slices of cold boiled bacon, cut these into squares the size of the oysters. Take some little silver skewers, a piece of bacon, then an oyster, alternately, on the skewers, six on each, sprinkle with breadcrumbs mixed with chopped parsley. Broil three minutes over a brisk fire. Serve on the skewers on strips of bread fried in butter.

Beef Marrow Crusts.—Soak some beef marrow in cold water, drain, and then put it in a stewpan with a little broth; boil two or three minutes, then take from the stove; leave ten minutes, then drain on a cloth. Cut the marrow in slices, season it with salt and cayenne; have ready some pieces of fried bread prepared as for "Oyster crusts," put the marrow on the fried bread, with a little finely chopped scallion over the top, and send to table very hot on a serviette.

Custard.—Put two ounces of grated cocoanut in half a pint of milk, add one ounce of sugar and a tablespoonful of rosewater; let it simmer over the fire for fifteen or twenty minutes, then put it into a deep pie-dish; mix with three well-beaten eggs one pint of cold milk and one ounce of sugar, pour it on the cocoanut, and bake in a moderate oven.

Caramels.—To six ounces of desiccated or grated fresh cocoanut add (if the former is used) two ounces of caster sugar, if the latter, three ounces will be required, two tablespoonfuls of flour, the whites of three fresh eggs, and a few drops of vanilla or rosewater; drop the mixture in little heaps on a tin sheet, and bake for a few minutes in a moderate oven.

Omelet.—Beat up three or four eggs with one dessertspoonful of parsley very finely minced, and pepper and salt to taste. Put a piece of butter the size of an egg into a frying pan; as soon as it is melted, pour in the omelet mixture, and, holding the handle of the pan with one hand, stir the omelet with the other by means of a spoon. The moment it begins to set cease stirring, but keep on shaking the pan for a minute or so; then, with the spoon, double up the omelet, and keep shaking the pan until the under side of the omelet has become of a golden color. Turn it out on a hot dish and serve.

It may be better to do foolish things seasonably than wise ones inseasonably.

Confidential Correspondents.

MIGNETTE.—A gentleman, by an introduction at a friend's house, acquires a right to call. You can snub him with a "not at home," if you like.

H. GRAYSON.—You had better look upon the engagement as at an end. Poverty often deals harshly with a proud nature, and hardens instead of softening it.

ROSA.—Have patience. You are at the summit of human bliss; you, cannot wish to surmount it. Love, like fox hunting, pleases more in the chase than in the capture. If your lover thinks you perfection, and you love him, you surely can afford to wait.

ERNEST M.—If you delay you will only allow the enemy—for your rival must be considered as such—to make a lodgment and to strengthen his position. You had better at once declare yourself. Many lives are made miserable by the loss of a quarter-of-an-hour.

INDIANA.—The meaning of the word "sepoy" is a soldier. It is a corruption of the Hindostanee word "sipahi"—one employed as a designation for a French regiment, only pronounced "sphi." "Sip" means a bow and arrow, which were the original, or at least ancient, equipment of an Indian worrior.

VALEUS.—St. Valentine is the patron saint of the 14th of February; and about that time, in our climate, the little birds are supposed to be looking out for a mate; hence our custom of sending love tokens. At one time (see Shakspeare's "Hamlet") it was customary for the maid to wait on the bachelor, and choose her Valentine.

O. ALLEN.—You seem to be the victim of a varicose condition of the veins of the leg. You should not walk or stand about more than you are actually obliged to. Keep your feet and legs up in the horizontal position when you are off duty. A rubber bandage or an elastic stocking should be worn during the day, and taken off at night. Do not indulge in cycling.

NANNIE.—Your "beau" is peculiar; and, believing in the gentle chastity and coolness of woman, seems to be shocked when you show him the affection which he has excited. Your only way is to constrain yourself, and to appear cold to him. A man who appears shocked if his future wife applies to him the adjective "dear," must be of a peculiar temperament; and if he wants a little humoring, why humor him, that is all. He must be one of a thousand.

INQUIRER.—The phrase "the apple of discord" is probably, but not certainly, derived from the old classical story of Ate, the goddess of discord, throwing on the table at which the assembled gods and goddesses were feasting, an apple, on which was inscribed "For the most fair." Hera, Pallas, Athene, and Aphrodite claimed it, and their dispute was referred to the judgment of Paris, who awarded it to Aphrodite—whence sprung unnumbered woes.

S. M.—As the verb "show" makes in its past part, "shewed," as well as "showed," we know that "snow" once legitimately did make "snewed," but not snew. Thus "flow" does not make "flew," which is the past tense of fly, but flowed. Snow is from Anglo-Saxon, "snaw, snawsa," and, by the way, in some parts of England the word is pronounced exactly as the Anglo-Saxons pronounced it. If any man chooses to be pedantic enough to say "snew'd," instead of snowed, he would have a great many learned authorities to back him up.

G. F. B.—How can it be more correct to say, "She is a pretty woman," rather than a "handsome woman?" The two adjectives differ, or they would not exist. A pretty woman is not a handsome woman, nor vice versa. A fine, handsome face may be coarse even, pallid, strong, masculine; a pretty face may be irregular, and without one good feature, taken by itself, and yet the whole may be very agreeable. Pretty is a diminutive in praise; handsome, a fair and positive assertion; beautiful, an exceeding adjective. A pretty girl too often makes an ugly old woman.

ANXIETY.—Hebrew is by no means so difficult a language to learn as one would imagine, as far as the rudiments are concerned. Any good elementary grammar, will help you. You will find Hebrew difficult to read without the points, as the points, in fact, represent the vowels; and are a mere mass of consonants without vowels would even puzzle us in English. Look at your own name for instance, NXT. The Hebrew Bible without points, of which there are comparatively few editions, is for advanced scholars. Obtain, if you can, the aid of a Jewish teacher.

T. J. S.—Steady purpose will soon bring you to your aim. In nine months you can master all that you want to know about land-surveying. Go to a book-seller, and tell him to get you a list of elementary works on the subject; then study them, and practise when you can. But why do you think a surveyor higher than a schoolmaster? A good master who instructs our boys, instils proper ideas, cultivates virtue, and drives back ignorance and vice, is one of the most valuable of men. Most people undervalue their own occupations, and you are one of those self-tormentors who do so.

PATTIE.—When a man wishes to claim from a young lady a sister's love, he will gradually warm into something more affectionate than even a brother can be. He means more, and "Pattie" is very simple in believing that only friendship can exist. There is a very thin hair-line which divides friendship and love between the sexes. We are of those who believe the first cannot exist between single and marriageable man and woman. A man and his wife are friends; a man may be a friend to his friend's widow; a brother and sisters are friends; but as for two young single people of opposite sexes!—never.

MELANTHEUS.—Parrots are very long-lived; the "Memoranda of the Academy of Sciences in Paris" mentioned one that lived in the family of the Grand Duke of Tuscany in Florence, for upwards of a hundred years. Vieillot also speaks of having seen one near Bordeaux, which was at that time eighty-four years old. The average length of their life has not been accurately ascertained. Louis Figuier mentions the fact of a cardinal paying one hundred crowns for one that recited the Apostles' Creed correctly; and relates of another, on the authority of Le Vaillant, that the latter heard one say the Lord's Prayer, lying on its back and placing the toes together as we should join our hands! Meat is ver bad for them. Should yours become diseased you may attribute it to this cause. Bathing is their natural habit.